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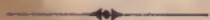
THE TORCHLIGHT:

OR,

Through the Wood.

BY HARRIET A. OLcott.

AUTHOR OF "ISORA'S CHILD."



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TO

MY UNCLE,

William S. Johnston,

OF CINCINNATI,

This Book

IS RESPECTFULLY AND AFFECTIONATELY

DEDICATED.

Brooklyn, N. Y.

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THE TORCHLIGHT:

OR,

THROUGH THE WOOD.

CHAPTER I.

MR. MILLER was in an unusual state of excitement. His physiognomy denoted a mind not easily ruffled ; his calm demeanor, one undisturbed by trifles ; and that the world used him well, was a fact undisputed. It generally does such men as Mr. Archibald Miller ; one whose word was as good as his note, his note good as gold ; and neither held in better estimation than his kind heart.

Yet, on the open brow and benevolent features, perplexing thought seemed fixed, betokening both bewilderment and pleasure. No wonder !—he had just emerged from the private sitting-room of Mrs. Castleman.

Mrs. Archibald Miller had lived and died, a simple example of youthful excellency, leaving her husband as unsophisticated, in some respects, as she had been herself. Her gentle virtues had inspired him with a whole-hearted trust in her sex ; he was shrewd, keen, quick-sighted in the ways of

men, but woman was to him the personification of truth ; not a goddess with sword and helmet, but the shadow of a being once loved, now an angel, white-robed—her prototype yet on earth, the shade a substance, the reality his future wife.

Mr. Miller was a man of business ; and as the phrase is, the architect of his own fortunes. His early life had been one of struggle and hardship, his maturity showing the fruits of it. Energy and perseverance were written on his strong, somewhat care-impressed countenance ; integrity in the honest expression of his clear blue eye ; nerve and courage in the firm outline, and defined curve of his well-formed mouth ; each feature speaking benevolence, charity, and good will towards men. His success in life was better manifested in the smiles and servility of his many courteous friends. What matter if he worked at the loom when a boy ? if he picked up what education he had by the way-side ? the wealthy, liberal manufacturer lacked no advantages now.

This the prudent, politic Mrs. Castleman, a decayed gentlewoman of decayed fortune, and decayed family (save some living branches entombed in large houses, accessible only to choice spirits), was aware of, when she took into the bosom of her cloister of “ genteel boarders ” the rich widower ; and some few months after, stirred up the peaceful depths of a heart, where the milk of human kindness never curdled, but creamed up sweet and rich, with all his memories and hopes of woman.

This she fully realized whenever she sweetened his cup—whether it brimmed with the herb of China, or her beautiful daughter’s inspiring presence.

It was a fine thing, Mrs. Castleman knew, to be highly born and bred ; of a good family of old Gotham, even poor—a distinction that gave her admittance into the side door of aristocratical mansions, invitations to family festivals, and

to funerals in the best society ; to the marriages, deaths, and to all the christenings of an extensive juvenile connection ; also, the privilege of watching and nursing, in most infectious cases, at the superb bedsides of her very genteel relatives.

These privileges Mrs. Castleman estimated—perhaps as few gentlewomen would—an appreciation visible in every turn of her aristocratic head—in every fold of her well-darned respectable gown, as she appeared among her rich connections, humbly, yet respectably. Yet, the time had come, when she felt also the inconvenience attending her very respectable blood.

It cost too much—not money, that she did not possess—but too much condescension, and body weariness. She had married at the age of thirty-five, without deriving great advantages from the change in her condition ; her husband having little with which to maintain her, or at his death, bequeath her, save his respectable name, and a small infant. Since this bereavement, she had been a source of trial to her relatives ; though no one could bring accusation for any known sin or offence, the conviction of which caused her to fawn, cringe, and make herself useful.

“ For most of the world’s favors there must be an equivalent,” suggested the experience of the sapient Mrs. Castleman, whose physical and mental energies were becoming lax ; her sycophantic smiles turning into unmeaning smirks ; her useful attentions into boring visits ; while her honeyed flattery began to work—the sour to rise on the sweets that rolled off her saccharine tongue.

That she had begun to ferment, was evident, though she had boiled down for thirty years, in the sugaring process, to make herself palatable to her condescending friends, to whom she had been as long a time a standing dish of discussion at all private family meetings.

For “ poor Aunt Castleman must be supported ;” and

time and trouble, no marvel, had somewhat vinegared her juicy nature.

Roving in an orbit, which but exposed her poverty, from its brilliancy, though seldom enjoying its mid-day effulgence, she could not fail to see that the clouds about her setting, if silver rimmed in the rays reflected, still grew blacker, and that the struggle she made to re-illumine, was but the expiring effort of a wick, from which the oil that fed it was departing. Could she have turned from this blaze of borrowed light, and pressed forward in an humbler sphere, with her energy and talent, she had done well; but there was the look back! Like Lot's wife, she could not turn to a pillar of salt, or she had been crusted standing; wrapped in her faded purple, gazing on the bright revolving wheel, on which whirled her family connections, glittering, shining in silks and gems, she resting from her toil, by which she had hoped to earn a counterfeit for the pageant.

But should this be the experience and fate of her Elinor, who, in the discarded habiliments of her proud rich friends, outshone them all? Could her beauty, her birth, save her from toil more laborious than that of the menial who works for bread? Could she forget that from her days of early widowhood, she had been cramped, fettered, chained down by the silver links that had made her a slave to the rich benefactors, from whom she had received bounty and condescension?

There was an alternative—one loophole of escape, a rich but “vulgar match.” Such Mrs. Castleman deemed an alliance with the worthy manufacturer. But she was a woman of calculation, as well as policy. The scales were adjusted. Wealth and Mr. Archibald Miller lay heavily on one—patronising connections, their charities, and long looked for legacies, poised the other.

Which should be the portion of the radiant Elinor? The

weight of a mother's cupidity was added to the golden scale. With a bound, poverty went up. The motes in the sunbeams turned to jewelled drops, and gathered in a crown on the head of her child.

This was but a vision, yet a bright one to the victim of pride and poverty, whose slavish dependence had cankered her heart, and made humiliating her widowed life. It was a sweet morsel to roll under her tongue, that for her only child, she could secure independence. She considered herself, and was resigned to it, a recipient for life.

Mrs. Castleman drew about her shrunken form a time-honored shawl, laid her aristocratic head upon an old tapestried chair, and while rubbing back and forth on her skinny finger, an old family ring, brought herself, with powerful throes, to the deliverance of her burden. The pride that had sustained and consoled her in all her woes was now a cast-off load. The aristocracy of wealth she had despised, as such a proud woman could "vulgarity;" now, she fled for refuge to the golden calf, and was ready to sacrifice to it caste and her idolized child.

With her sagacious eye, she discovered the preference of Mr. Miller for her daughter, exhibited only in the fervid glance that dared not rest on her face, but fitfully wandered, stealthily catching the gleams of hers. She saw, too, that with uneasy restlessness, foreign to his bearing, he marked the devotion of others to her, whom he presumed not to address, and that the diffidence and unassuming character of the man, alone prevented him from seeking Elinor in marriage.

And she was partly right, though weightier objections arose in the widower's mind combating his love. Mr. Archibald Miller believed, rich as he was, influential as he might be in the commercial world, that Elinor Castleman felt above him in position; that in education—thanks to a

rich uncle—though but a girl of seventeen, she surpassed him ; that she visited in circles which he had never entered, and more than this, that she received the devoted attentions of another, suitable in age, as brilliant, as highly educated as herself.

At the table, among her mother's "select friends" (she never called them boarders, excepting in advertisements), Elinor was not seen, and but a choice few were ever invited into her presence—the retired parlor, which she graced proudly, as if in a court circle, receiving her worshipers. Those most privileged at the present period, were young Hugh Shelbourne and the rich, unassuming widower : the first fascinating the daughter ; the latter, being indispensable, from his experience in the world, to the widow, whose demands upon his sympathy and counsel, only equalled those upon his liberal purse.

Good, patient, Mr. Miller ! Who else would appreciate as he did, the multiplicity of her trials, from the accumulation of debts, large and small—the tyranny and exactions of landlords, butchers, and bakers—her outgoings and shortcomings—her poverty in purse, and her wealth in great ancestry ? and how few would so generously, delicately state, not hint, that he was willing and glad to relieve her by an advance, meeting the exigencies of the case ; while at the same time he so handsomely (rather briefly she sometimes thought) closed the conference by giving her a bank-note.

Mrs. Castleman found no such friend among her family connections, and daily drew the credulous man more into her confidence.

Never had he pitied woman more ; yet never felt he more unfeignedly, that the daughter was a being far beyond his hopes. The widower, with all his bonds, mortgages, his real estate, and bank stock—his boy of ten years, and his

fifteen of seniority, considered himself no match for youth, beauty, and “family ;” and but for the trials of the widow, her yearnings, and her discontent, he had been still un presuming ; and the young lady herself insensible to the prospects in store for her.

She was yet too young to balance without help, the scales that had decided the maternal head. Besides, she was occupied with Hugh, to whom she had given, in exchange for a whole heart, a promise, some day, of her hand ; he believing the transfer equal, and most people, who had seen them together, supposing a chance offered, might have imbibed the same opinion. Hugh Shelbourne, at nineteen, was in love, as a man rarely is twice. He said little of his passion, but it leaped with his pulses ; while with eye, soul, and lip, he met the flutterings of an unawakened heart ; coquetry and vanity he mistook for a full return ; the mounting crimson of gratified pride for the sympathy he sought. Sincere, ardent, and hopeful, he believed Elinor all she seemed ; while he worshiped her seductive beauty, believing he had her heart’s gold.

Yet reserve marked their intercourse before Mr. Miller, and the latter felt no sting of reproach when the widow revealed to his vision a prospect so alluring, as an alliance with her daughter—a communication made with “embarrassment,” and with “confidence,” causing, as we before stated, some excitement of the manufacturer’s mind, as he came forth from her “private sitting room.”

How mistaken he had been in the bearing of her child ! How strange he had never discovered the secret preference the mother acknowledged had so long possessed her heart —a preference so well concealed from him !

Delicate, shrinking flower. He would seek it, woo it, wear it. Mr. Miller was no longer the reserved, deliberate counsellor ; but impulsive, excited ; and as liberal as if the

widow's debts were his own ; as if the payment of his board could never be cancelled—dwelling with her as he did, just for "protection and company."

How confidential they grew ! mingling such strange liabilities, as falling in debt, and falling in love ; the widower becoming endorser and paymaster out of the goodness of his big heart (softened unwittingly) while talking of her child. Contemptuously she laughed at Elinor's liking for Hugh, wincing and squeezing her old ring at his allusion to "humble birth and connections," piteously groaning "poor thing !" when he spoke of his lovely wife and her early death—a topic which led to disparity in years, calling forth youthful efforts from the politic lady, who suddenly reflected on her own possible chances for matrimony.

But a gray lock protruded. She saw that the widower's were brown, and with a sigh, covered her withered cheek, nevertheless, rejoicing that she would always, if never again a wife, be the very respectable relict of Peter Castleman.

Seeing that her companion was obtuse on these points, so tender to her, she deemed it politic, not to risk a certainty, for a possibility remote ; and although she might sacrifice a daughter, she could not lower herself. Objections accordingly were plausibly waived, and Mr. Miller, convinced that Mrs. Castleman had sought her child's welfare, though she paved the way to it by a step so agitating. And before he left the fond parent, struggling with life's necessities, and exciting emotions for her daughter's happiness, he felt deeply for one whose delicacy he blindly believed had almost checked the utterance of truths so sweet—so delicious to him, and reiterated with fervor, the promise never to reveal the confession she had made.

"It would shock and distress her," she plaintively murmured.

"I could not be so dishonorable."

"She needs a protector older than herself."

"And could she, so young, consent to be a step-mother?"

"Affectionate child! she dotes on children."

"She must have known I needed but this encouragement."

"And you have long thought of her?"

"Nothing but the intelligence you have imparted, could have given me courage to make proposals of marriage to her."

"But you will await my time, sir; the dear girl will be so unprepared. Could you not pave the way by some gift on her birth-day?" said Mrs. Castleman, hesitatingly.

"Nothing would afford me more pleasure. Allow me to be your banker, while you suit her taste. She might like a new bonnet, or a work-bag."

"Something which she could treasure as a lasting memorial," interposed the widow, shrinkingly.

Mr. Miller thought of a garnet ring his mother used to wear, also one of jets, and a gold one, in which two hands clasped; and wondered if he could find them, in his extremity. Not that he grudged the money to buy the most costly present for his future wife, but he was not accustomed to such purchases.

He had unlooked for and timely assistance in his dilemma; and that night it was agreed he should accompany Mrs. Castleman to a jeweler's, which appointment was faithfully kept; she, after an hour's examination of various jewel cases, coming forth with two, each modest looking—one for her daughter, and another, with a little black cover, which might, Mr. Miller thought, be a pair of scissors, or thimble, for herself; he being ignorant, until the evening of the next day, when the bill was presented, of the contents of either.

He paid the amount, thinking of the beautiful neck and arms the ruby necklace and bracelets would adorn, wonder

ing, meanwhile, at the widow's exquisite taste, and on what occasion she expected to wear her own set of pearls.

He had promised obedience to Mrs. Castleman's measures, for the promotion of his wishes—consenting to endure a week of suspense, before he met the bearer of his birth-day gift.

He went home with the widow, and her two little morocco cases, and fell a-dreaming, strange as it might be, not of Elinor, but of his dead Lucy, with a little gold ring upon her finger, on which was engraved his name with hers.

But while he gazed, the vision changed ; and before him stood the mother of his chosen bride. It was an ugly dream, for her look was sordid, as she seemed to say, while holding a casket—"Give—give me more!"

CHAPTER II.

THE mother and daughter soon met—the latter in ignorance of the recent negotiation preliminary to her matrimonial settlement. She was in a desirable humor for its accomplishment ; having just received information, which greatly disappointed her, relative to the will of a deceased uncle, from whom she had been taught to expect a rich legacy.

Chagrined, and vexed, she was the representation of ill humor, as she sat tapping her foot upon the carpet, with a crushing look, that threatened at least the worsted roses beneath her feet. If her beautiful features could be made ugly by expression, the experiment was tested. Her white, clear brow was knit between its arches, over a pair of eyes dark, blue and flashing—the look of scorn and anger they wore in unison with the haughty curve of her scarlet lips, which seemed never to have uttered a soft, much less a loving word.

But what her face lost, her form gained in the violence of her emotion. That she could not distort ; for the passion she revealed, but made more visible its expressive proportions. Rich in fullness, yet light, elastic, she stood, dilating, with wrathful feeling.

The coming of her mother only aggravated the rage of the afflicted Elinor, increasing to vehement demonstration her anger.

Turning towards her bland parent, who held the gift, she

exclaimed, with an energetic motion of her hand and foot—
“Thus have we been treated by every Castleman who ever lived or died. This last defunct specimen of a niggardly race, has proved himself but a sample of the rest. I would like to write his epitaph, and for ever renounce a name I have learned to hate.”

“There must be some mistake, my dear ; I am sure your Uncle Tom would have been more considerate of the relict of his deceased brother, and her orphan child, than to have disinherited us,” said Mrs. Castleman, reading the tale of disappointment in Elinor’s face.

“How can we be disinherited of property to which we had no claim ?”

“But you know, my love, we had expectations.”

“And so had his dollish wife, to whom he has left all his estate. You have led me to look for something handsome from him, the mean dotard, confidently as I now expect the sun to rise on another day of poverty and degradation.”

“And I nursed him through all his malignant cases !”

“Thank God, I never spoiled my eyes or complexion for him, that is one satisfaction ; but I forget, the poor widowed sister has been remembered.”

“Thank the Father of all mercies !”

“Don’t begin blessing, in your Irish way, too soon,” said the exasperated girl, “unless you wish to praise God, and your liberal benefactor, for a toddy kettle of one of your great ancestors.”

“He knew my veneration for antiques, though money would have been more acceptable, and quite soothing to my grief. But it will not be politic for us to betray our dissatisfaction (the widow inwardly raved), and as he was so long a-dying, it can’t be expected we go into the deepest of mourning. And as destiny, or rather a kind Providence,

has provided you with unlooked-for mercies, we can mourn as those not without hope!"

"And Sister Castleman can conform as she has done, 'to—circumstances.' But what, pray, are my unlooked for mercies? A scant brocade of the last century, from Mrs. Tom Castleman, or a chance as a governess in my illustrious relative's family?"

"Be patient, Elinor! this is not the last chance. Your Aunt Sally can't last long!" groaned Mrs. Castleman, for the moment forgetting her daughter's prospects. "A little money would have come very convenient at this time; they cannot do less than to send us both respectable black. It will be such a stylish funeral, we must not miss of it. I suppose the coffin will be solid wood, and silver mounted, and even the horses wear vails. If your uncle had been more liberal, I would have doubled my crape."

"But you think one thickness enough for a toddy kettle," interposed the sarcastic beauty. "I would advise you to have your cap made at the undertakers."

"My dear, we must not forget the family and all its branches will be in bombazine and crape. Your Aunt Tom's mourning will cover her whole skirt."

"And Sister Castleman's her whole cloak," emphasized Elinor, "which conceals her envious hatred of the whole race of survivors. But I shall have one consolation, when the last leg of the whole male generation is laid out, that I never made one humble obeisance for a farthing belonging to them. I did promise to be introduced this winter, by Mrs. Sylvester Castleman, but it was with the expectation of taking down the colors of her most amiable daughter Alice."

"There will be no impropriety in your coming out when you get into black beads and purple roses. I can dip your moss-buds into sugar paper, and bring them out fresh as

violets. I suppose I shall have to vinegar up my old crape—but it is a bad time to get up a coloring, the day of the funeral.

“It don’t take you long to get up a coloring; but I’ll be annihilated if I’ll be dipped in any black vat, or go in any dye for this funeral. I sometimes think I will marry the first rich suitor, be he tar or tailor. I was as sure of a legacy from Uncle Tom, as I was of seeing his pomosity buried.”

“I should like to see the corpse, and how the family take it. It will be a good thing that his drinking is put a stop to. I feel slighted not to have been sent for, if it was only for the looks. But I’m not going to be cheated out of everything, if I am poor. The time was, when I should have been woke up, if it was in the dead of night. It won’t take long to brush up my old lutestring, and get down my black Navarino, and go around and see the goings-on. Such a waste of expense as there will be—well, it’s none of my business, maybe he’ll leave a poor widow after all. But it won’t do to say so. I’ll just slip around.”

“Bring me a daguerreotype of the old miser; and make my adieu to the uncoffined members, hoping them all a similar fate before I ever tread another of their salons. Pray what have you there, and what important news for me?” questioned Elinor, imperiously.

The face of her mother changed, and with a show of her teeth, opened the jewel case, and held up before her daughter’s eyes a superb necklace, pin, and bracelet.

With haughty condescension, Elinor took the ornaments, and laid them against her neck.

“Pray whose are these?”

“Yours, my love—a birthday gift from Mr. Miller, who hopes you will accept them as a token of his admiration, and with his wishes for your future welfare and happiness.”

"Impertinence!" throwing down the jewels, "does he presume to insult me? the low born clodhopper!"

"My child," said Mrs. Castleman, speaking nervously, "if it was not for going to see your Uncle Tom, I could tell you enough to make your mouth water. My dear love; I do want you to be Mrs Archibald Miller, and shine 'in your own coronet.' Elinor, you are mad to scorn such a match: do you know he is up to his eyes in money, and ready to endow you with it?"

"And his fustian self in the bargain?"

"He really loves you, and although not exactly of our set—he will not be invited I suppose to the funeral—still you can polish him, and in time raise him up to the Castlemans."

"How can you talk so, mamma? you, who have fed me with 'blood' and 'breeding' with my baby pap, till I have sickened, revolted, and finally learned to feast on the sham food, and believe it necessary to my existence! You talk to me of marrying a rich mushroom; a man who has acquired his fortune making broadcloth! Is it for such grand estate you have kept me so secluded from your household of 'men feeders,' as you have wished me to consider them, all but Hugh? So your intimacy has resulted in this, has it? Why, bless me, I thought he was addressing you, mamma?"

"You know, my dear, that I do not approve of second marriages. I shall always be a relict. Indeed, I should feel reluctant to ever lose the name of Castleman. By the way, I wonder in which room they have put your Uncle Tom. He'll make a very stately corpse—but speaking of Mr. Miller, I must say I never gave him any encouragement to think that I could enter again into any precarious, I mean conjugal relation; but for you, Elinor, it is time you released your hold on the Castleman estate, and clung to another

less airy, I have weighed the matter," said the mother, holding up her hands, as if in one she held a soap bubble, and in the other a golden pumpkin, and "I would have you," said she, shaking the rubies, to which she added the pearls, "buy your own trinkets and ride in your own chaise. Is not this better than gallivanting with a boy," she now whispered, stretching her goose-skin neck, "poor as we are?"

Elinor Castleman crimsoned to the temples, to hear Hugh Shelbourne thus spoken of. She felt that it was too true, and yet how rich in intellect, in heart, in love for her!

"Can I not have a flirtation," she replied, "without my prospects being periled?—*apropos*, we go to-night to the Opera. I like this pin. How it would enrage Hugh to have me accept these ornaments."

"Mr. Miller is worth a million."

"Poverty! poverty, it is a temptation to bid you flee!" As Elinor spoke, she walked with a stately step towards an old fashioned mirror. In doing so, she tripped in a worn place in the carpet, betraying the penury of the household. With her dainty foot she contemptuously raised the tattered woolen, then trampling it down, tossed her superb head, making more grand the setting, as it capped its white pedestal. Beneath, a bank of snow rose and fell, as pride swelled her bosom. Her beautiful form, she fancied, adorned with costly magnificence; her neck and arms flashing with jewels. Thus she could enter the arena of fashion, secure of conquest, bringing to her feet the proudest, who now looked upon her in pity for her dependent situation.

To Elinor Castleman this was a vision that bedewed her eyes, and sent a throbbing flood to her heart. Her look was cast, as she turned from her own person, upon that of her parent, around whose sunken cheeks fell lace, old and well-darned, about whose shrunken form folded the scant

breadths of a deceased relative's gown, and whose thin lips ever stretched into a beseeching smirk, bespeaking the genteel, but proud beggar. Coursing still, her eye marked the wholly cautious, politic demeanor of her mother, betrayed alike in the soft, dulcet tones of her voice, and in the sleek, cat-like clasp of her small thin fingers, as she ever extended them to people of "respectability"—letting them slide down her old silk folds, at the approach of such as came not within the pale of the aristocratic circle, in which she kept her own birth, if creeping, cringing at the door.

Not so, Elinor ; proud as she was by nature, proud by education, she had ever incurred the enmity of such as would befriend and patronize her—scorning their second-hand gifts, scorning their well-meant favors, scorning even the relationship of those who only sought her society, as they did that of her mother—for charity's sake.

She would be courted, and won, for herself. She chose not to shine by reflected light ; and nothing enraged her more than to be introduced as the niece or cousin of a distinguished relative. The adoration of Hugh Shelbourne was, therefore, luxury to her exacting temperament, and the romance of his ardent love, intoxicating to her pride and vanity. She knew that for her he had sacrificed rich offers of independence, and preferred to commence a life of intellectual toil instead, with the remuneration of her hand in prospect. Yet would not years intervene before he could gratify her love of position and wealth, enabling her to effect her ambitious schemes ?

With such passing thoughts, still looking at the jewels, Elinor turned towards her mother, who had now commenced arranging her funereal robes, and said lightly, thinking deeper, twirling the ruby bracelet :

"I have hardly looked at this Miller. You ordered me

to be civil, and supposing him your prime minister, I obeyed. But this talk of elevating one of his calibre, is a task not for me. If I marry him homespun, he will remain homespun. And so you think this man of wool would be very generous in his equivalent for this very pretty hand?"

"Don't affect childishness, Elinor; you know your great fault is too ripe maturity. In fact, you never was a child, even in your infancy. I gave up trying to subject you after the first three years of your life; and now, if you say you won't marry Mr. Miller, why I see no way but for us both to die in poverty, though, as I before said, there's your Aunt Sally. I wonder who will have your Uncle Tom's old clothes? Life is so uncertain, as your father used to say. How little I ever thought that I should be the relict of Peter Castleman, or that your Uncle Tom would ever see his end."

"And leave you a toddy-kettle," said Elinor, mimicking her mother's mock solemnity.

"That's true, my daughter," went on Mrs. Castleman, now standing before the glass with a crape vail thrown over her face, to see the thickness and depth of its mourning. "Death comes like a thief; but if you marry Mr. Miller, and be left a relict"—

"But what," said Elinor, impatiently, "has this wise harangue to do with the question—to marry or not to marry this manufacturer? I am in a desperate mood to-day, from this miserly treatment. This hanging on like despicable toadies to the skirts of rich relations is slavery, that I, for one, will not submit to! What are you but a shadow, following these Castlemans, who have, every one, root and branch, snobbed you since my father's death. By the way, after the funeral you had better bring home your legacy; you will have a chance to ride in the Widow Tom's carriage, if you brush up your raven plumage."

"Do be quiet, Elinor," said Mrs. Castleman, her slight frame fluttering. "I am so confused! What will be expected of me, so connected as I am? It will be such a stylish funeral. It makes it so bad, his dying without any preparation—without even a black bordered handkerchief. Now, if you will only let me say to Mr. Miller—we ought to say something handsome"—Mrs. Castleman put her hand to her forehead—"that his dazzling gift is as acceptable to your taste, as the owner will be to your grateful emotions. I can then ask a small advance on his board."

With a deeper flush on her brilliant cheek, Elinor exclaimed, tossing her head, "I will have none of this contemptible beggary, showing the paucity of our means! My mind is made up—I will marry Mr. Miller!"

"You always was a sensible child. I remember when you was but three weeks old, how decided you looked around the room. But, I beg of you to be discreet, and not offend anybody. Hugh might be useful to you some day, so make it as easy refusing him as you can, and as Mr. Miller is a widower, it won't be necessary to be bashful about hurrying matters. The quicker it is over the better."

"Make it easy for Hugh," thought Elinor, walking the room, while her mother put a black vail over her Navarino, and after tying about her neck a piece of rusty crape, went forth to see the corpse.

Soon after, the door-bell rung, and a young man came forward unexpectedly to Elinor, and putting his arm about her waist, said, while the down of his beardless chin touched her face, "Elinor, are you afflicted with this event?"

"Oh! is it you, Hugh?" said she, shrinking from him, embarrassed. "At what? My uncle's death?—no."

"Naughty girl, you won't go of course to the opera to-night, with me?"

"Yes."

"No, no, Elinor, it will not do; it would injure you much, and look improper."

As Hugh Shelbourne stood back, speaking decidedly, his extreme youth seemed less apparent, the fire and energy in his lip and eye giving character to features wearing the fresh polish, and soft but firm outline of early manhood.

"You look excited, flushed. What is the matter?"

"I am disappointed! I expected—but no matter." Elinor turned coldly away.

"I know your vexation. I met your mother, who told me. Don't be annoyed by this. You shall yet laugh at the Castlemans. I am glad of it." The tone was both playful and earnest. "You were not so frigid last night." Tears came into Elinor's eyes. She felt in that moment an appreciation of the heart she was casting away. She could not then tell him of her decision; and as if she was, and would be his, she radiated, warm and loving. It was fascinating to such a woman to have a worshiper like Hugh; and though she treated him capriciously, still, there was more in the denial of her smiles, than in the surrender of twenty loving Juliets. Hours flew swiftly by; Elinor was never more charming. For the period, she crushed her ambition, and drank feverishly, as if with desperation, her last cup of love.

"You will go with me to-night?" she whispered.

"No! I would not injure my future wife. Why do you wish to brave the opinion of those who would condemn your sense of propriety?"

"I care not what I do!" said Elinor, springing from the form of her lover. "Henceforth, I care not what I am. Will you come, again?"

"I cannot understand your strange question—your strange mood. 'Come again!' Would I not cross seas to pass such an hour as this? Have I not for you abandoned my

home—prospects of wealth, from one who would give me an inheritance, for a child's devotion and services, that I might be near you?"

Elinor hid her eyes, from which gushed passionate tears. She would not be soothed—she would not explain or be comforted. Hugh left her, first bending over her head, parting her tumbled rich locks, kissing her white forehead.

It may be easily imagined that Aunt Castleman was an acceptable visitor among her rich, stylish relatives, where Elinor was not. It was true that most of the visiting was on her side ; but then it was done faithfully ; and when the door bell rung through their long, high halls, they all knew by its small tinkle, that it was "nobody but Aunt Castleman," and she having nothing to do but to look after her few "genteel boarders," and contrive how she could keep body and soul together through the year, could call more conveniently than they who had to eat, instead of getting great dinners—no small duty, the world knows.

But the proud Miss Castleman, who took their faded finery, as if she conferred, instead of receiving, a favor, was odious to them ; and none the less to the younger branches of the Castleman family, for her acknowledged beauty, which they talked of less than of her pride and vanity.

The sleek, soft, silky widow, with her humble step, and afflicted look, her tones cracked for the occasion, has whimpered her condolences, and been ushered into the high, sombre room, where each picture and spacious mirror is hung like herself—in black. Conducted by the housekeeper, who noiselessly leads her to the sable-palled coffin, she glides forward with a handkerchief to her eyes, to which she had coaxed some tears, and bends over the dead face of her "lamented relative."

"Life is so uncertain," she quavered out, with her small whistling mouth screwed down at the corners. "It is a

satisfaction that he looks so quiet—such a blessing to the afflicted family and connections. How natural!"

"His nose used to be redder. He gave up stimulants afore he died," said the housekeeper, in tones hurriedly unfeeling. "Have you seed enough, marm? I can tell you all he's dressed in; linen, flannel, and cotton neck-tie. Shall I shut up? It's onhealthy stayin' here. I never keeps company with sich, long."

"Silk velvet, I suppose?" The widow put on her glasses to examine the covering.

"Yes; and the trimmin's be English crape. You'll come I s'pose. It's goin' to be grand. The bunnets and gowns is made, all black as sin. You've been billeted, I expect?" added the superintendent, who took liberties with Aunt Castleman, on account of her meek look and long buried head gear.

"They will expect me, of course," replied the afflicted, taking the handkerchief from one of her eyes, which she had rubed sympathetically red; and putting down her crape, walked solemnly to each of the solemn picture-frames, and with a solemn floating step, in to see the mourners; where, after passing some trembling eulogies on the deceased, she took gratefully and feelingly, a package of colored "black" from the sable weeded, closeted new widow, and accepted, with a falling tear, an invitation in the second carriage, next the hearse. Being a "season of affliction," she did not stay at dinner, but went home with a quicker step, hoping her own had not suffered.

She found Elinor with eyes red and swollen, from whom she hid her parcel. Poor Mrs. Castleman never lost any friends or gifts from her pride; and one who was fortunate enough to obtain a sight of her trunks of old clothes and tag-rags, would have been likely, excepting from her respectable bearing, to have suspected her honesty. We

say she never lost any favors from her pride, for the reason that it flowed only in one channel ; and that, in being the relict of Peter Castleman.

The evening of the same day, Elinor went brilliantly attired to the Opera, accompanied by one of her admirers. The same night, by especial request, her mother was permitted to sit up with the late Hon. Tom Castleman. Neither Hugh or Mr. Miller knew of Elinor's daring insult to the memory of her uncle ; though before he was buried, it had been reported, as she expected, to his wealthy widow.

The day following she remained shut up in her own room, refusing the society of Hugh, while her mother spent the early part of it sewing on her weeds, sighing in discreet seclusion, not over her bereavement, but that she was not enriched by the will. Nevertheless, chewing the cud of consolation, that humbled as she was, her child, by a wealthy alliance, could buy the independence which would enable them both to live in the style of their relatives. She knew that Elinor had alienated herself from her father's family ; and although a secret advocate of the anticipated connection, she determined to openly express her grief to them at such a mésalliance.

She did not return from the house of mourning until late at night—feeling grateful for the privilege of putting away exposed valuables, and in setting things in order, while the new crape and bombazine went up stairs with its fashionable wearer, who, with well feigned grief, also laid aside with propriety, for a drinking, cross old husband.

A different scene was enacted that night in the poorly adorned home of Sister Castleman. Hugh Shelbourne, with his young, warm heart, believed and trusted in the faith of Elinor, grieving, not with anger at her caprices ; believing

if it did rain, snow, and blow, that the sun would shine out the warmer for fitful gusts.

But to-night she met him with strange friendliness. Still he did not like, that while she turned not aside her beautiful lip, from it should fall such cold appellations, as friend and brother, to which Hugh at first laughed and then chilled.

It was, to do Elinor Castleman justice, hard for her to ice the way to her frozen declaration—to prepare Hugh for what might stun him. It was certainly kind in her to attempt it. The news of a friend's death comes less suddenly with accounts of illness ; it is better to see a loved one die before the lowering of the coffin ; and so it was better for the young heart of Hugh Shelbourne, to know that his Elinor could look him in the eye, hers blue, dark and undimmed, while she spoke her cold words.

Ice bolts they were not, yet such they seemed, as they came, freezing, chilling his blood, which curdled round his heart, to there beat and throb, nearly bursting its tenement—coursing back in its channels—rushing to his brain. As the strong man reels when the more fragile stands the blow of suffering, so Hugh Shelbourne staggered when Elinor told him, with staring eyes—seeing nothing through a film of darkness—with a voice harsh and cruelly modulated (for she had sobbed it dry and husky), that their love was child's-play ; that she could not marry a poor man ; that she must bid him go from her, never seek her more, never hope to wed her ; that it was her own decision ; that she did not love him, and could not wait for the gold she needed.

It was strange, perhaps, Hugh should be so uncivil ; to utter no word—not to oppose or agree with her, but to sit still, growing paler, his features sharper, his deep eyes

bloodshot, his lips chiselled as if of marble ; then to rise, stand against a pillar, his arms folded, looking at her as if she was a stone, with no word, no betrayal of feeling, until she said : " It will be long, very long, before you are rich. Am I not right, Hugh ?" —when he gasped, " Yes," from his white lips, and no more.

That night she told her mother, she could have contended with opposition, grief, or anger; but such silence, such stony apathy, had nearly petrified her. Her mother was sorry that she had not made it easier for Hugh. The discarded lover was soon many miles from Elinor Castleman. She wondered for long years *where*.

The miserable had fled ; and the next night, in the same place, sat a calm, confident, happy man, ignorant of the sorrow he had created.

Mr. Miller had now more than two of the beautiful fingers in his clasp, as he greeted the once distant girl, when, for the first time, he dared to take in at a glance, the circumference, length, and breadth of the attractions in store for him.

The lover of small experience, was as silent with rapture, as agony had made the heart that beat far distant.

Elinor Castleman was not one that charmed her lovers alone by actions, or words. She spoke slowly, and with deliberate languor ; was seldom vivacious, though like moonlight upon deep waters, the sparkle of her genius was seen, even in her most placid moods. But in anger, she was vehement, and passionately earnest.

When she aimed to attract, she seldom failed to succeed ; but there were few she cared to interest. Such were of marked character. She had appreciated the force and strength of Hugh's, the only one who could ever control her. When excited with feeling, he made her think of a stormy sea, and of its blue serenity when calm, beneath which lay

depth and gems ; while the dew of her bright intellect seemed to him fresh as it might have lain on the new-born roses of Eden.

Still Elinor Castleman had kept from him the core of her heart ; he being impressed with her seeming fervor, believing her attachment fervent as his own. Had he numbered ten more years, she could not have sent him from her. Hers was a character requiring the sterner influence of maturity to govern it. The virtues of an angel, seemed not sublime to her imagination, could he not command “ silence in heaven.” But Mr. Miller, good worthy man, was as insane with the idea that she had loved him, as was ever an asylum-lunatic that he was Khan of Tartary.

It was true, he saw she was not like his Lucy, who was so early sainted ; but he was younger when she was his bride. He could not expect, he thought, the same demonstration of preference in the magnificent Elinor ; he would as soon look for the moon in her silver majesty to come down and greet him, as that she should give him all her brightness, as Lucy did, in a single glance.

With his eyes dazzled, and senses charmed, he believed himself a supremely happy man. His first wife had been an invalid, which had endeared her to him with double power ; still her declining health imbued his life with sadness, from the time he took her to his home, until the hour she put into his arms her child, and died.

His second marriage, for he wedded Elinor, was a bewildering change. In the possession of youth, health, and beauty, single-eyed, he scanned the heart and mind of his young bride. He was blind to the influence of external circumstances—placing wealth in her control—creating smiles and approbation, as she, for the first time in her young life, felt she had bought the right, in the sacrifice she made, to exercise her dominion. He did not realize that

ambition ruled her heart ; nor know how much she had craved the power to be independent of the world's favors.

Mr. Miller had not been a resident of New York, but when there, took lodgings in the house of Mrs. Castleman. His life had been chiefly spent in a manufacturing district, until after the accumulation of a handsome fortune, when he resorted, during the summer season, to a place he had purchased soon after his first marriage, valued from the associations of that period.

It was an old fashioned house, situated among the hills of Berkshire—a two story building, with a high flight of granite steps, broad flag-stones leading to them, from the tall gate of elaborate joiner-work at the entrance.

Wings extended from the main building, now half hid by sycamore trees, which brushed against the closed windows. The parlors, each side of the long, wide hall, were wainscoted with carved cornices. This entrance was papered with gaudy pictures, representing scenes from *Tellemachus*, in which Calypso flaunted conspicuous. The figures, large as life, with the verdure of the tropic isle, daubed without vista or perspective, gave a social genial look to the broad area, sentinelled by a brace of bull-dogs, or sphinxes, as the fancy might create them, carved in stone, looking hideous, scaring small children, and causing juvenile researches in zoology.

The house stood far back from the road, and was shaded by the branches of towering elms, two of which having united themselves, seemingly in infancy, were now twins in stature, their trunks interlaced in a huge braid of bark. The low windows were covered by Venetian blinds, casting a shadow over furniture, which might have been pronounced glaring, by the fastidious—the chairs in the chief drawing-room being of green painted wood, golden pears and peaches ornamenting their backs ; those in the other apartments

yellow, with red cherries emblazoned thereon ; also, hard bottomed settees of the same colors and fraternity.

Ingrain carpets partly covered the floors, on which stood quadruple legged tables, of all sizes, and awkward patterns, some covered with blue woollen, flowered with yellow. Baskets of fruit, with green owls and parrots in plaster, adorned the mantelpieces, beneath which extended the jambs of wide fireplaces, leased to andirons long wedded—they encircled by high railings of fender-work, enclosing marble hearthstones, by which the simple Lucy had sat the first and only winter of her married life.

The bed-rooms, over which jutted gable windows, and a well battered shingle roof, were furnished correspondingly—gay flowered chintz and quilt patch-work on mountainous feather beds being chiefly observable. Here the walls were papered with pictures, verdant with Alpine scenery ; the whole prospect awakening impressions of a hilly country. Though worn and faded, still the *tout ensemble* was picturesque and gay.

The view from the front door, seen through the trees, comprehended that of a distant lake, environed by an amphitheatre of hills, which embraced it lovingly. An apple orchard and a grove of evergreens comprised that on the east, among which stood maples and old oaks. Here on the low ground, extending towards the meadows, millions of strawberry vines grew, also early field flowers. But sweeter than all other scents was the breath of the spice-smelling evergreens, from whose coverts came, in the genial months, bird-music—melody, making a pleasant tenor to the bass of the waterfall, near by.

It was enough to Mr. Miller, that his home was among his native hills, within sight of glorious old mountains, majestic in their grandeur, whether hoary-headed, with winter snows—robed in the first flush of summer green, or

in their autumn dress, bedecked so gaily, tropic birds gold and scarlet-winged, might seem to have here assembled, their feathers newly dipped.

It was enough to him, that in his youth, and the meridian of his life, he had trod each valley and hillock, near which the old house stood, though his boyhood had been passed in one much humbler—that he had sat, in summer time, the last ten years of his life, in the open door-way of the gaudy papered hall, looking forth upon fields of new-mown hay, snuffing its cloverly smell, where the locusts chirped, and the long grass rustled with busy insects, keeping music with the brighter winged gems of nature that beetled the sunny air—that here he had loved to look out upon the clumps of trees making arches solemn and dark as the cloistered aisles of dim cathedrals, holier than they—upon bubbling springs gushing out of rocks, watering the tufted seats that nature had made about the grounds—and more dear the association, that here, on the door-steps of his country home, he had played with his infant, motherless child, watching his gambols—pitying him for his bereavement—mourning for his own.

Dove-cotes he had placed in convenient places, loving the beautiful things that flew in and out, cherishing them like the robins who sung for him, as robins always do, sweet and early.

Raspberry and whortleberry bushes bordered the fields, where the country children were free to pick the fruit garneting and jetting the hedges. It was such a place as the genuine rambler loves, and all about, such a country as the Housatonic claims.

Mr. Miller's residence—for it had no name poetical or descriptive—lay in the outskirts of a country village, frequented by summer wanderers.

This was the only inducement for the young bride to gratify her husband's wish, to seek it, soon after his

marriage, thinking that here she could very tolerably pass the season, dull in town. The mountain air invigorated her frame, causing Mr. Miller happiness, as he thought of the home which he fancied would so much delight his bride. But sitting astride one of the stone dogs at the entrance, was an object upon which her attention fastened, one soon in motion, bounding over lawn and fence, as the carriage approached, not stopping, until in his arms the father clasped his boy.

“Your mother!” assisting to the window the urchin of ten years.

The eager child felt the shrinking betrayed in the salutation received, and sat a long time on the other stone dog, before he followed into the house.

With indifference, the lady ascended the steps, but started back as she observed the interior of the premises. Commanding herself, she silently surveyed within, though outwardly complacent, she despised her bridal home.

Somewhat embarrassed, the bridegroom showed his wife over the mansion, pausing at the entrance, where the boy kept company with the twin beasts, to pat him on his head, then with her went off on to the ground below.

It was the hour of sunset. The long shadows were slanting over field and meadow, making full of checkered beauty the golden landscape. Mr. Miller watched the earnest gaze of his wife, as it seemed to seek something not yet found. What it might be, he did not ask. He believed she must enjoy contentment and happiness here.

They had had a long ramble, bringing a bloom to the fair young cheek, vigor to the steps of the loving husband, and to both an appetite for the comfortable repast awaiting them.

After tea, Elinor employed herself in choosing her own room, and her mother's, to which, the following day, the

effects of Mrs. Castleman were removed, including a cabinet of "antiques."

Her arrival was not a quiet one, owing to the variety she brought with her, the carrying in and disposing of which, together with her fluttering anxiety lest breakage should ensue, creating solicitude and confusion. It was not that trunks of all sizes and shapes, containing the pickings of years from the rubbish of her rich relatives, lumbered the wide hall, but there were pyramids of boxes, baskets, and bundles ushered in, besides cages in which were aged birds, and unfledged squabs, roosting and nestling in feathers, seeds, and dirt—latticed prisons, incarcerating tame snakes, sickly white mice, and rabbits—their pink eyes jaundiced by confinement ; also, a squirrel, who from the fatigue of the journey had ceased to whirl, and now reposcd under his tail, on a case of dead beetles—the inmates having lost their pins, and tumbled into a dust-heap.

In the midst worked the agitated widow, giving orders regarding the disposition of her valuables. Arthur had a day of rare enjoyment. He seemed to have been in an Egyptian museum, for though he had not seen the nails of Pharaoh, or the horned oxen, he had, nevertheless, been awed by the ashes of time.

While passing through the homely bed-room to her own, carrying in one hand a bottle of lizards, she employed the other pinching significantly the arm she held, her foot being not less busy in treading on the toes of her daughter.

The room, now fast filling, overlooked an apple orchard, where in their season, the trees blossomed plentifully, producing within view, golden pippins and seek-no-furtherns. Laden branches peeped into the low windows, beyond which was a panorama of hills and mountains, and nearer by grassy slopes, red with clover, and earlier starred with dandelions. Without were sweet odors and sunny influences.

The view within was soon changed, all savoring of the widow and her arrangements, being funereal and well mum-mied. In her omnium gatherum, she had grasses and roses, but they were pressed and dried ; bright-winged insects—but they were spitted and trussed ; fruits and flowers, waxed and wired ; shells and fossils, imbedded in glue ; and a perfumed apartment ; for each embalmed, coffined, and long-hoarded treasure was odoriferous of its occupant.

Elinor knew the evils attendant upon her mother's arrival, but pride induced her to give her a home rather than suffer the humiliating alternative attendant upon her roving, beginning life.

Accordingly she employed the servants in arranging her repository, which was done amidst the shrieks and groans of the widow, who saw nothing in prospect but demolition. Her innumerable gowns, not one of which was of modern make, or suitable to her age or form, consisted of every fabric and hue from brocade to a shilling print, the colors varying from the most sombre shade to sky-blue and rose color befitting the maiden. Some were made for fat figures, and some for the fragile ; some for the tall, and some for short ; and all collected during her widowhood, to be colored and made over.

The bestowal of the above required no ordinary care or management, and might have been completed harmoniously, but in the removal of one of her immense trunks, the hasp broke, and out upon the floor came its riff-raff. The burst was an explosive one, the ejection violent. A wail of lamentation succeeded the report, and with depicted woe upon her face, Mrs. Castleman fell on her knees, to grasp the hoard, and save it from theft.

With amazement the lookers-on saw a haberdasher's shop laid open before them, the contents of which would have been invaluable to the vender of damaged goods. In cha-

otic confusion, upon the carpet lay old ribbons, tangled fringe and worsted, half-made lamp-mats, and stocking-tops, marabout feathers, and salve, old letters, and curious fish-bones, snarled frizettes, and false teeth, old shoes of all possible sizes, stuffed with seeds ; pop-corn, and sugar-candy—the dresses and finery of the dead and living for past generations ; and over all, to keep out moths and cockroaches, was powdered camphor, pepper, and snuff. That a drug shop had been outpoured, was the first awful conviction upon the bystanders, which impression they were not long permitted to suffer or enjoy, her assistants being suddenly ejected from the apartment, and locked out, save Arthur, who was permitted to remain to clean a snake box, a duty he performed badly, in consequence of a convulsive sneezing fit. Well had it been for her son-in-law, had she been there entombed with her relics ; but there were times when she stalked abroad, making new arrangements, or rather, stirring them up in the old homestead, which Mr. Miller had thought so comfortable. He seemed to have been badly brought up in matters of taste ; and so he began to think, when a month after his marriage, masons, carpenters, and upholsterers, filled his house, and to subsequently send him in their bills. He had never thought of skylights in doors, of conservatories, libraries opening on to “English lawns,” laundries, bathing, and billiard rooms, and of furniture corresponding ; but, simple man, was contented to sit, where his Lucy had done, by the sash-blinded windows, where the lilac bushes, and the cinnamon roses shook in their leaves and violet clusters—liking no place better than the little “sitting-room,” now made into a “boudoir,” where his Elinor lounged mornings with her French plays, and met “especial friends” from the city. This was the only spot he seriously hated to relinquish—to see unchanged ; but how could Elinor know how dear it was ? She must have a

“secluded spot,” and he would not tell her that here his child was born, and here his Lucy died.

And so he remained silent; acquiescent to the tearing down and building up, beginning to think he was having a Solomon’s temple of the new “Castlemont,” for such was it ultimately called: only there was no “Ark under the wings of the cherubim.” But there was one who enjoyed the improvements daily progressing; the boy, Arthur, who looked upon the new comer as at a beautiful picture or statue behind a railing. Mrs. Castleman he viewed with wonder—a feeling akin to that which awed him when he went into her cabinet of time-honored things.

Elinor’s dread of the boy was calmed when she saw how distantly he greeted her, and readily fell into her views of calling her “Mrs. Miller.” She at first liked the way, though awkward, with which he took off his cap, passing her, bowing with gravity—dignity which increased, until she became piqued with his independence. That he admired her was evident, which was some alleviation of her chagrin; and that he was “homely and gawky,” elicited neither surprise or displeasure, his most impertinent reply being, that *she* was handsome enough. This salvo caused him the indulgence he craved, a room in the attic unmolested by carpenters.

Blinded by the persuasive smiles of his youthful wife, Mr. Miller granted her every indulgence; while she, having been limited to the scantiest resources, saw no bottom to the stream of his wealth. His house must be made into a temple of luxury, and her person adorned as its goddess. So quietly had she effected the changes made in his old home, that Mr. Miller had not been aware of her secret disgust at its former appearance; and looked upon what it was, as among the things that had passed away, cheerfully, yet with regret. He enjoyed Elinor’s rural fêtes, but craved

rest. He was willing to follow his charmer into as many scenes of gaiety as would vary the monotony of her too quiet country life ; but he had acquired an uncontrollable habit, contracted in long years, of sleeping at night ; he could not therefore, like his young wife, turn light into darkness, and out of darkness make light. He had, too, the vulgar habit of rising early ; he liked to be abroad with his eyes to the east, when the god of day burst its dam of emerald hills, spreading a sea of golden water all over a world, dark and cold as lead, till wet and sparkling it gleamed in the gushing flood. But for the sun-worshipper, there was other radiance now. For this he would try to reverse the order of nature ; but it must be for a price the gay one could not yield ; and the time came when the fond husband yearned for more day gleams and less of the artificial glare which dazzled, without affording one cheerful picture of domestic happiness. Body and soul-wearied, he finally plead for a change.

An absurd idea this was to Mrs. Miller, which she evinced by characteristic contempt. But the maddest folly of which the credulous husband was guilty, was the inference he conveyed, that by it his own happiness would be increased.

Any one who had known Mrs. Archibald Miller, and ever seen her large, languid eyes open full upon one she derided, can imagine how, and in what manner, she received the proposition. Mr. Miller least understood her—mistaking the look for one of disappointment. Her eyes, we have said, were opened, but his were still shut. He was sorry to oppose his young wife ; and what was more remarkable, he ventured to express his absurd opinions ; Mrs. Miller meantime wondering if the man whose name she had taken, for value received, had any private notions, opposing hers, expecting her to conform to them. She had asked his acquiescence as a matter of

civility, nothing more. Good breeding did not require that she should repeat the question. Indeed, was it a question?

Mrs. Miller had a way of perfecting her aims quietly. But there was one thing she might have overlooked in her shrewdness—that Mr. Archibald Miller cajoled, might be a different man from Mr. Miller no longer duped.

It hardly seemed to her an argument—the talk about the dancing-parties—in other words, the night revelling, masquerading, and rioting, that went on in the once old-fashioned mansion; for it was all on one side, from a voice and eyes, yet speaking admiration for the beautiful creature, who slowly walked at even paces past him, awaiting the ending of remarks, thought by her both long and stupid.

“You do not know, Elinor, how wholly, through the season, I have sacrificed my tastes to please you?”

“And that you will still?” Mrs. Miller questioned, *sotto voce*, still walking.

“You know, my love, my dancing days are over—”

“And that mine have just begun.”

“I do not forget this; let me see how you look about the matter?” Elinor did not refuse, but at the next turn, came nearer her husband.

“I am sorry to oppose, or to thwart you, but I wish to invite the old people, Arthur’s grandparents, and his Aunt Jane, to spend some weeks with us; and although somewhat contrary to my principles, I have permitted dancing and card playing, yet I would like such amusements to cease during their stay.”

“Your sister Jane does not dance the polka?” queried Elinor, looking past her husband out the doorway.

“Jane! Elinor, you are wild!”

“Perhaps she and the old people like eucher?”

“You are certainly jesting. They don’t know a dancing

step or a card, and would be shocked to see them in the house."

"Is it not then better they remain where they are? My guests might be shocked at their habits and peculiarities."

"You forget, my dear, you are speaking of the parents and sister of one whose place you fill; and that they will look for a child and sister in you."

"Indeed, Mr. Miller." Elinor spoke civilly. "Unfortunately my arrangements are made for the summer."

"And are you not wearied?"

"Next week guests will arrive from the city; dresses and scenery are already prepared for tableaux, and a fancy dress pic-nic by the water. Unless these friends of yours can participate in my amusements, they would be happier at home. Mamma is arranging some apparel for a part, but I have advised her to act that of a statue representing Truth." Elinor slightly sneered.

"You could personify that better," said Mr. Miller, smiling. "It is a pleasant thought to me, Elinor, that if you play many parts for others, to me you enact but one: if you overrule my judgment, you do not do it by deception. I know you will answer me truly. Will it not afford you happiness to be kind to my friends?"

"You are right. I will not deceive you. I cannot resign my enjoyments; neither do I wish for the acquaintance of any obscure, hum-drum people. You may as well know, Mr. Miller, it is my intention to lead a gay life."

"I have not been accustomed to so much dissipation and such late hours." Mr. Miller withdrew his arm.

"You have unfortunately married a young wife."

"Youth is generally pliable."

"Consequently can manufacture materials for happiness out of dull resources. To-morrow evening we shall have a ball and a supper. I am sorry you are indisposed for it;

but you can hardly expect me to retire from the world at my age, if I have married a man older than myself." Elinor stopped to arrange a falling braid. She was scrupulously nice with her hair.

Mr. Miller was hurt by the foregoing conversation. He had not gained a hair's breadth by it, which he thought of, while his wife arranged hers composedly. She passed him as she left the mirror. He stopped her. Elinor was passive and patient.

"Did I not think that you really loved me ; that for this sole motive you gave me this hand (it was lost in his palm), at this moment I should believe you were careless of my happiness."

"Pray, don't be sentimental ; it is weak enough in a woman, but in a man unbearable." Elinor turned away coldly.

"Am I criminally so, when I wish some assurance of your wish to please me ?"

"Mr. Miller, it might be well to remember the difference in our ages."

"I am often reminded of the disparity ; still I had hoped that it did not debar sympathy between us."

"I proposed to-day to read you a play of Racine's ; but believe you are not a French scholar."

"Nor an English one ; but trust even my imperfect knowledge of human nature, may enable me to comprehend some day, my clever wife. I think you would not intend to deride me, Elinor ?"

"You have irritated me, and I may have been uncivil—if so, I apologize."

"Is so much ceremony necessary between us ?" Mr. Miller put his hand upon his wife's shoulder. "Let us reconcile this disturbance. Will you not consent to some cessation of visiting ?—less company at home ?"

"If you insist, I will devote to-morrow to you, and postpone the party until the next day. What do you require of me?"

"Go—go, Elinor—nothing—I require nothing of you." Mr. Miller left the room, passing to the hall, to his old seat by the doorway, not as it was of yore ; but arched and frescoed ; while around him stood sculptured divinities, and near by, hung grand old paintings. Calypso had vanished, and Mentor had departed ; but Venus and Apollo had taken their places.

He seemed to have been blinded, and was recovering. What a film had covered his eyes ! How slow in coming off ! Dream-land was back of it, full of golden hopes, long treasured, where an angel stood, the consoler of his earthly pilgrimage. He could not, he would not rend it. He would dream on, dream till death—if blind, remain so.

The blind dreamer went to sleep, in the hot summer noon. His slumber was restless—disturbed. He seemed to be looking for Elinor, while she wandered farther from him. He was groping in darkness, and finally seized her ; she, despoiled of her beauty, crushed, forsaken.

He awoke, and thanked God it was but a dream ; he had awakened by the gentle tap of Mrs. Castleman's finger, while her soft voice melted on his ear—in tones not golden, yet ringing of the metal.

"It is an affliction to you, my dear sir, I am aware," said she, "that our sweet Elinor is so gay. (She had been listening.) I wish she more entirely assimilated with her excellent husband. But then she makes our home such a little Paradise—so lively at all hours. I never see poor Brother Tom here, but we who are of earth, earthy, require some repose of the body as well as the soul. Would you be offended," she continued, "if I were to offer to pledge you this esteemed relic for the loan of a hundred ?"

Mrs. Castleman had so long lamented her poverty, that in her conversation she sometimes failed to remember that Mr. Miller had settled upon her at the time of his marriage, a handsome annuity.

"Elinor deems it proper that I should appear at her fancy ball, in character." The widow drew off her family ring.

"Mrs. Castleman," said Mr. Miller, annoyed, "you will oblige me by never again offering me security for your own property. If your income is too small for your necessities, it shall be enlarged. I do not wish to see my wife's mother acting the part of a beggar."

"I do not intend," said Mrs. Castleman, humbly, "to act that part, but should prefer any character not ostentatious. My reduced circumstances forbid much display; and having been so long a deceased relict, propriety compels me to wear the weeds of humble poverty. I prefer to represent 'Virtue unadorned.'"

"Here is all I have about me," said Mr. Miller, disgusted. "Consider it your own—you owe me no thanks."

"This will furnish me drapery. Elinor thinks I would look less ostentatious among the shrubbery. She is so candid and truthful, you know. I shall retire from the marble early, to my own room, which will comport more with the afflicted state of my mind, since the demise of poor Tom. If, Mr. Miller, we could be allowed the privileges of a Christian family!"

Arthur now approached his father, with a request. He walked forth with his son.

Mrs. Castleman went to the boudoir of her daughter. She found her perusing a note, her face pale, and her eyes tearful. The proud woman was now absent, and the girlish Elinor wept over an old *billet doux*.

The coming of her mother recalled her to her position, for

she saw that she bore in her hand a crumpled note, and believed that she had just begged it of him she had offended.

"I am glad to find you alone, my child, and to learn, accidentally, you have assumed the privileges of your sex and birth, with your low-born husband. A mother's advice may be salutary. Never yield. Be civil and politic ; gratify his little whims ; let him smoke, chew and spit, if he likes, keep dogs, or young bears, but in all things of importance, have your own way. Put your foot down lightly, but put it down. I have discovered your excellent husband's eccentricities, and that meanness and vulgarity are inbred with his low blood. Another of his vices is jealousy. He watches you like a cat, and if you don't cure him, he will be a tyrant. He reads your letters when you are out, and sneaks in the bushes, and in the halls, to get a sight of you when you think he is a-bed."

Elinor's face crimsoned with indignation.

"Will you excuse me, madam, if I decline any of your advice." She took up a book.

"Certainly, my love, and I will instead, seek yours. I wish to give my countenance, if quite in the shade, in some humble way to your artistic performance, and have decided upon Virtue, which will be less expensive than a more active part. Statuary requires little in the way of dress, though in this instance I would consider it proper, even if scant."

"You are certainly not expecting to enact any part in this scene !" said Elinor, with disgust and astonishment. "You will oblige me by keeping your own room through the evening, instead of making yourself ridiculous. It is enough that you have exposed your weakness to Mr. Miller."

"Certainly, my love, I will not forget that I am in your house, under obligations such as I can never repay ; and that I am still poor and despised. Perhaps I had better return to keeping boarders. Your Uncle Tom's widow" —

"Do you say this to insult me, madam? or do you wish to show your ingratitude for the liberality of my husband?" questioned Elinor.

"Excuse me—I forget you and your excellent partner are one. I am aware that dependents should keep their proper places, and maintain silence. Mr. Miller is not a vindictive, if an artful man; and I have no doubt, with a few of your affectionate caresses, that he will think his darling an angel. But don't overdo it, Elinor."

Mrs. Castleman went out with a smirk, and a light, floating step, to her own chamber.

Before she reached her museum, she met Mr. Miller, and Arthur returning from their walk. With a show of her gums, she bowed, patting the cheek of Arthur. The two had had a long ramble.

In the excitement of his recent married life, Mr. Miller had felt the want of tranquillity. He had rushed onward with Elinor's throng—struggling, not enjoying. In his leafy bower he had seen the waters leap and gurgle, yet flow at last serene; he had heard the birds sing, but in the noon-day nestle silently in their coverts; even the rushing winds became noiseless as night whisperings—why then should his perturbed spirit never be still? The boughs shook over him their frail white blossoms, but they came down like snow-flakes; the buds swelled and grew scarlet—but without show or merriment. There was scarce a breath, or sound of wind on the air. He felt the luxury of nature's silence—her holy, tranquilizing influence. Like medicine, it soothed his spirit—he forgave his wife her cold, harsh words.

The scene changed in the house that night. No city assembly was gayer or more brilliant, for well its hostess knew how to complete her triumphs. The grounds were full of visitors; charades had been played, and the wildest mis-

chief conjured, until the evening far advanced, when, under the canopy of stars the merriment still went on. Within were card-rooms, and those of more private gaiety. Mr. Miller roved in the crowd until the hour of two, looking as upon a panorama, feeling a desire to see the shifting scenes go by, that he might catch a brighter one to come, and learn its satisfying enjoyment.

Seeing him wearied, his eye was directed by a looker-on to the belle of the fête. He heard the murmurs of the crowd, and knew they talked of his wife. She passed him in the dance. Her eyes flashed like stars in their own blue ether, treading lightly, yet with majestic step, as if the weight she carried was her own. Applause followed her. Admirers of her sex sought to see the grace they could not imitate, while she gaily floated, a girlish matron, careless of aught but conquest. She dropped her bouquet. Her husband handed it to her. With a smile she turned towards the supposed gallant, who brushed her shoulder with the blossoms.

The low "thank you" was arch and fascinating. It was only Mr. Miller !

"Elinor, you will be ill!"

As well might he catch a revolving orb of fire, or hold communion with a meteor's flash. Her partner awaited her attention. The waltz began.

With a chill the husband looked upon the young face that no longer wore a smile for him. He left the rooms and went to a remote wing of the establishment. He believed himself alone in this part of the house, but while going through a long, dark hall, he saw in the moonlight, standing by the window, looking down upon the garden scene, a being robed in white, her grey locks erect, her form silent and motionless. Unwigged, unsilked, unstuffed, and untoothed, Mrs. Castleman had also wandered for the same purpose.

Hearing a step, she disappeared in the darkness. Could she ever—the husband asked himself—have been beautiful as Elinor?—and his wife ever become false in principle as the miserable woman whose shadow darkened his household? Shuddering, he closed his door, praying that he might not live to see the wreck.

CHAPTER III.

IT was a pleasant sight to Mr. Miller to see Jane Selden, Lucy's sister, go about his house making it so comfortable, orderly, and cheerful—though the sunlight she brought was of the soft, misty kind, that never dazzled, but always comforted.

Mr. Miller liked to have her by his hearthstone—would have liked her always there ; and so would Arthur, who looked up to her as to an elder sister, or a young mother.

But Elinor avowed she preferred a tabby cat for company. But there had been a birth in the family, and the services of the maiden-aunt were not unappreciated.

Arthur Miller had a little sister ! a very common bestowal, as the reader may estimate the gift, but to the little attic student it was as if heaven had opened, and dropped in his arms a cherub—something that he might love as he could a thing so little and gentle, and he, so homely and gawky, perhaps be loved in return ! Brave, affectionate boy ! How nobly he had borne neglect ! How secret, yet how true had been his sympathy for his lonely father, and how significant his boyish demeanor, which seemed to say, though silently, “ There is one heart left for you.”

Scrupulously respectful to Mrs. Miller, treating her coolly as she treated him, he was still ready to deprive himself of rest, or to incur fatigue in her service. Yet, motherless boy, how he sighed for one loving look, one fond caress from the soft white hand ! He marvelled not that his father had

married her, for that she could love, he believed, by the way she talked to her bird.

He often looked at himself in the little oblong glass that had reflected his young mother's face, and wished he was handsomer, since she, the beautiful, had thought him ugly.

But there was one place where every limb in his body grew graceful; where with the boy-spring of health and happiness, he could leap fences, pitch hay, and come indoors, or go out, "the handsomest boy in the country;" and that was at Grandpa' Selden's. There was one, too, there, who gave him all the love he asked—dear Aunt Jane—and one more awkward, Mr. Zebedee Flint.

But now that the new baby had come, all else was forgotten by Arthur. A strange idea took possession of him. He wished to name the child. He had never made a request of his step-mother, but so strong was his desire, he ventured to designate his choice.

Surprised, yet pleased, Elinor smiled upon him—he, the unloved, awkward boy—and repeated "Jeanie—Jeanie!"—So it shall be—"Jeanie Miller."

CHAPTER IV.

FOUR years had passed. The Millers still resort to Castlemont. During this period, the wife had been famous at home and abroad. She has learned to be proud of her husband's reputation and position ; secretly discerning that from its influence she has derived advantages, aside from his wealth—a conviction not openly revealed.

Believing him vulgar and inferior to her when she married him, the prejudice remained unrooted, until the unwelcome sentiment had been betrayed privately and publicly.

But when she saw her error—when too late she found she had alienated him from her—that she was no longer an object of his worship, a heavy blow was levelled at her pride, and weightier it fell, as year after year his influence and importance increased. She would have now recalled him, but though she knew it not, he was not recallable. The cataract had fallen, and contempt had deadened his love. It was a sentiment not easily changed in a mind once so childlike; now cruelly taught to distrust. Yet they were a civil couple. As the shadow of affection disappeared in their intercourse, ceremony was more strictly observed. Mechanically he seemed to wait upon and protect her ; faithfully guarding her, jealous of her reputation, for her sake and his own.

To him she was scrupulously respectful, secretly yearning for the place which she had lost. He no longer contended with her tastes, but allowed her to enjoy them, while he

sought resources independent of her. Still pity mingled with his stern indifference, pity arising from the corrupt influence of a parent, whom he had learned to wholly despise. If he ever now looked upon Elinor with softened emotions, it was when the former came in his way, sleek, fawning, cringing, for his favor, with crocodile tears, lamenting the coldness, brought to its zero frigidity, by the action of her own benumbing influence, upon two beings whom she had brought together, poisoning their confidence, fevering the pulse of the one, by her tales of "jealous doubts," and with her secret devices, palsying the stronger, the loving heart: thus, while agitating the black waters rolling between them, she made impassable the gulf. Growing sour and salty, neglected by the relatives at whose feet she had cringed a parasite, she would make others miserable as herself. With the total extinction of every generous attribute, her soul seemed kept alive in its socket by the hope of possible legacies from the Castleman family. That she and her child might be free, she had bartered her; and yet, what was she still? "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?"

CHAPTER V.

MR. MILLER breakfasted alone—he had long done so, and sat in his library by a cheerful blaze. Jeanie played on the carpet near him. His attention was suddenly attracted to the child, whose glossy head came up to the height of the table, she having commenced dashing from it letters and bank-notes, aiming at their destruction in the fire.

“Jeanie, my little daughter, don’t touch papa’s papers.”

“I make ‘em fy up chimney!” The little girl persisted in her determination, several of which she had thrown on the coals. Mr. Miller rescued those most valuable, and imperatively forbade her from touching more; but with her accustomed wilfulness she screamed, stamping her little feet and snatching, with the alertness of a sprite, a package of the money; and before her father could save it, the notes were in a blaze, while she continued her cry: “I will! I will! I make ‘em fy.”

Between alarm and vexation, Mr. Miller gave the child a shake, drawing her hastily from the table, to which she had ran for more booty. Finding herself thwarted, she threw herself upon the floor, where she continued to scream, kick, and beat her head.

Not only his loss, but the ungoverned temper of the child, distressed him. He attempted to subdue her, and to make her submit to his requirements: to rise from the floor and

pick up his letters—which she suddenly did, but to dash them all on the coals.

Her apron caught in the flames. Though the loss was doubled, alarm was only felt for the child. The blaze was stifled, and the little girl left uninjured, her face and arms having been saved by the exposure of his.

Attracted by the noise, Mrs. Castleman opened the door of the library; and seeing Jeanie struggling and crying with terror and passion, she awaited no intelligence, but hastened to the apartments of her daughter, and, with her hands lifted, exclaimed:—

“Mr. Miller has nearly killed little Jeanie—he has beat her till she can’t speak!”

Elinor had been for some time aware of her husband’s fears respecting the ungovernable will of the child, and too readily believed she had received severe punishment.

Pale with indignation, she drew about her the folds of her wrapper, and hastened across the parlors to the opposite wing, her husband’s library. She found the latter attempting to hush the cries of the child, while he held her on his knee, she insisting that she was cruelly hurt.

At this moment Mrs. Miller entered, when she sought to snatch the weeping little Jeanie from him.

“If you wish for an example on whom to practise your theory of discipline, sir, I trust for the future you will seek one in some other child. Will you give her to me?”

“I prefer that you leave her with me.”

“I will not!” said the mother, passionately, throwing aside her long, undressed hair, while hot tears fell down the child’s face as she held towards it her own.

Jeanie sprang into her arms, when she was carried from the room. Mr. Miller soon heard in the next, the sobs of both. He could not remain quiet, but sought his wife, whom he found hugging her little girl, and weeping violently.

Little Jeanie had been appeased with a ring which she had taken from her finger.

He had rarely, if ever, seen his wife weep, and though he had long since endeavored to steel his heart to any emotion she might exhibit, he disliked to have her think he would be unreasonably severe with her child ; still, the keen sense of injustice done him, withheld an apology.

“ Will you,” said he, sternly, “ deny me any authority over her ? She will be ruined by this insane course ! ”

Every tear was hastily dried on Elinor’s cheek. Her reply was brief, but agitated. “ She is mine, and that is enough to cause you to ill-treat her.”

“ Do you suppose, madam, that I have no love for her ? ”

“ I know not who, or what you love, but I know that she loves me.”

Once, cutting would have been these reproachful words—they now fell light as straws on a waveless lake. “ Shall I allow,” the husband continued, “ disobedience and passion in my child to go ungoverned ? Listen to me ! I speak no idle words ! She shall not be ruined if”—Mr. Miller’s eyes burned like coals—“ if—I take her from you.” As the husband spoke, he looked at his inflamed hands, now agonized with pain. “ Yes, madame, suffering as I am at this moment, with the anguish caused by saving her from the fire, I would rather this right hand perished there, than that she grow up undisciplined.”

“ The flames ! ” screamed Elinor, wildly. “ You did not in anger drive her into danger so perilous ! ”

Mr. Miller walked the room, making no reply ; and then sat down by a window.

“ Jeanie burn papa’s papers,” lisped the child, running to her father’s knee, climbing there, while she laid her cheek against his.

“ And all this is for so slight a cause ? ”

"Any explanation of this matter is useless. I performed what I considered my duty under the circumstances; and henceforth I shall do the same. Though we agree on no other point, madam, on this we must not differ."

Mr. Miller went back to his study. He felt all the renewal of past misery. He had believed himself insensible to the taunts and reproaches of his wife, whom he now seldom spoke to, or met.

Must he give up, too, his darling child? know her daily weaned from him, and taught to believe him cruel and heartless? must he see her educated as her mother had been, the love of the world her passion, while the formation of her principles constituted no part of her culture? Such were the queries of the fond father, and disappointed husband, as he bowed his head in sorrow.

For the period of three years he had borne such humiliation and grief, as man rarely suffers. Still, he argued, duty demanded him to cherish and protect a wife, whose imprudence, without his care, would bring dishonor upon them both. He learned, the first year of his marriage, that his love and characteristics were unappreciated, and that to her he was wholly unknown.

There had been seasons, but they were seldom, when back upon his heart came the tenderness he felt for her, and like a pent-up torrent it there swelled, nearly bursting its prison. But the winter of his sorrow had now come; dark and chill were its snows, freezing even to the depths, the current of his love. But as he became colder and more distant, Elinor was curious to know how valuable had been her loss. As her once ardent worshipper receded, she looked after him, yearning for his truth, which she found not elsewhere—for his whole-souled tenderness, which she had scorned, but now prized. Yet two years had passed since she had received one fond look, one loving word. Her vanity was wounded.

With deep emotion, Mr. Miller saw that his little Jeanie was like her mother—spirited and beautiful, yet how affectionate! With infinite satisfaction, he noted the growing love between the brother and his little sister—an attachment increasing with fervor from the "hour the boy felt a pair of little arms about his neck, while in lisping accents she called him "brother." With the ardor of his nature, he devoted himself to her infancy and childhood. "Arthur" was the first name she breathed when she awoke, and whether the amusement anticipated was a frolic in his arms, a spin from his top, or a view of his soaring kite, the laugh of the merry little Jeanie was never so glad as when excited by her boy-brother.

Elinor adored her child, and with pride saw herself reflected in each feature and motion of her darling. The training of the little one gave her not a thought, and when in ill-humor—a term she always applied to her paroxysms of rage—she sent her to the nursery, or gave her into the charge of Arthur. Thus much with the latter in her infant years, she imbibed many notions of right and wrong, and from her young preceptor was early impressed with the lowness of truth.

But from the time that the mother had snatched the child from its father's arms, she was taught secretly to avoid him, and both by the former and its grandmother kept purposely from his presence, and, with plausible excuses, remote from his apartments.

Thus Elinor Miller had defeated her husband; but she had not obtained her victory without a heavy cost, and the hour was fast approaching, when, for the first time, she would learn the character of him she had despised. He could know that for the exchange of his truth and love he had received but indifference and scorn, and make no sign of his grief; but his child!—must she be taught likewise to

hate him? No; he had other plans for her, but time wore away, and they remained unfulfilled. In the same house the husband and wife still lived—but separated. She had chosen one wing of the establishment, while he occupied the other. In her own apartments Mrs. Miller had her gay receptions during the summer, and when in town, was equally secluded from her husband, where, save the visits received from his son, he lived alone. His aversion of his mother-in-law had finally banished her from his presence, making her henceforth his spy, and open, as well as secret enemy.

Still matters of business brought the pair occasionally together. Jeanie had reached her fifth year, while Mr. Miller saw with pain her culture still neglected; and in his brief interview with her, that she had already imbibed her mother's love for display, and that the visions that filled her infant mind were based on the passion.

Bright summers had winged their flight with the unmated couple, bringing only sterner winter to their hearts. Gayer seasons had passed in town, where at a fashionable hotel they had taken lodgings, Mrs. Castleman having left to attend the last illness and probable demise of her wealthy sister-in-law, Sally.

Mr. Miller was never more outwardly respectful—the wife never more publicly deferential; she passing for a gem of sparkling lustre—her heart a living coal; he for a worthy, benevolent man, insensible as an anchorite. But there were wifely demands exacted of him, suiting not the monastic order; such as an epicurean taste could only crave, and an hour had come when the draft was heavy. Gold had united them, and gold soldered from time to time the nuptial links.

Elinor requested an interview. He came, his passport with him. Mrs. Miller held in her arms her prototype in feature—the child of their mutual love. She requested larger sums than he had yet bestowed, but would make the

payment more convenient for him ; and hinted, with tones that slightly trembled, the wish that her allowance might be drawn without the trouble and humiliation of a personal demand.

“ If you will send the child from the room, I will make arrangements to that effect.”

But instead, Jeanie flew to her father’s side, twining his neck with her little arms. It was a week since he had held her. Clasping her, he drew her closer.

“ Go now—Arthur wants you.”

The little girl with a bound sprang from his embrace, and from the room, leaving her parents together. For some time neither spoke. The wife finally looked up inquiringly. She observed her husband ; his noble carriage and person, and for the first time, as she glanced at her own in a mirror, thought he did not suffer in comparison with her. She continued to look upon him, while his face seemed to become like stone, so hard and stern each feature grew. But once before had she seen the same frigidity of expression. It was when they parted. She shuddered, remembering she had raised the barrier, and he had left it standing.

The hardened face was turned for the utterance of words still harder. “ Yes, it is time,” he said, “ we came to some arrangement more befitting our position—the life we lead—together. I have long contemplated it ; no apology seems to be required for the movement upon which I have resolved.”

Elinor’s form was bent forward, her eyes expanded, and her pale lips apart, breathing quicker, as she clasped her hands.

“ Madam, I have determined to save you the trouble and humiliation of personal demands upon your husband—a separate maintenance will remove this unpleasant necessity. We must live apart, not united as now.” The tone was sarcastic,

as well as sad and bitter. Elinor's countenance growing pallid, showed that she was unprepared for this.

"You are shocked, I perceive," continued the husband, with less composure, turning his eyes from the beautiful, pale features. "Once I could not have said as much, so calmly, but time and circumstances have aided my strength, as well as resolution, enabling me to look upon you, henceforth, as a stranger in my home—an alien from my heart. To effect the last I needed aid—that aid has been furnished."

With a groan, Elinor's head bowed over her hands.

"The world will be surprised," continued the husband. "We have seemed to sustain the conjugal relation—the drama has been well played—to the end."

Elinor Miller had recovered; and though motionless, speechless, was still a listener. She felt annihilated—crushed with mortification and disgrace; and bitterly that upon herself she had brought her future humbled position. She called her pride to her aid, and spoke.

"What reason do you propose to assign to the world for abandoning me?"

"Yes, the world! We need not ask ourselves why—the world will need some vindication of the step, and it might seem more considerate that I should give you my protection, the support of a husband's confidence, though our communion be but that involving debt and credit. I shall amply provide for you, leaving you to choose your own home, and go immediately abroad."

The hue of death now overspread the cheek of the discarded wife. With a rush of agonized feeling, the consciousness of her helpless situation came over her; at the age of three and twenty years, thrust upon a censorious world, discarded by a husband, faultless in its estimation—sustaining no longer the position of an honored, if not a loving wife. In the violence of her emotion, she could have

cast herself at the feet of her injured husband, and implored him to recall his sentence. In this hour, she appreciated and respected him. But with unparted lips she sat. Had she died there, she would have remained speechless—rooted to the spot.

At this crisis, Mrs. Castleman, who had returned to town, overhearing enough of the conversation to alarm her, slid in at the door. With a bland convulsion of her elastic muscles, she oozed out a few thick words, like the soft droppings of melted butter, which became thus intelligible :

“ It is so seldom we enjoy such a meeting, such lovely weather, under such sunny prospects, harmony so delightful, my dear children, you make me happy in this blessed union, cemented by enduring ties, privileges so sanctified, and lost for time and eternity by an unhappy relict. Elinor, let me see you, in this hour of blissful autumn, in the dropping of the leaves, embrace your excellent, and most respected partner.”

“ Madam !” spoke Mr. Miller, sternly, “ have done ! your child is no longer my wife, but in name.”

The widow shook her wasted hands like a shaker in a religious dance, while she shrieked as through a cracked whistle,

“ Oh ! child of my departed Peter ! and she a Castleman —to be deputed by a low-born son of degradation, and uprising of scum ! Don’t you remember,” she continued, in a voice no longer buttered but shrill, while with Randolph-like energy she extended her fore-finger, “ the time and the hour when as a stranger I took you in ?”

“ Well, madam ?”

“ And when the Honorable Tom Castleman lay in state, and I his afflicted relative, how I sunk myself, to elevate you to a family of lordly respectability, by giving you the daughter of Peter Castleman and his relict ?”

“I remember the time to which you allude.”

Mortification and rage now overpowered the grief of Elinor. Coming towards her mother, she spoke as if from an *Ætna* of pent-fires. “Begone! and leave the miserable to their own doom! You shall not disgrace me further! It is enough that your tongue has blasted my happiness!”

Like a cat, whose eyes are suddenly blinked, Mrs. Castleman slid through the door-way, whence entered the little bounding Jeanie, her sweet face full of loving emotion, as she clasped to her bosom a white pigeon. “Papa, mamma, see my bird!” But with a child’s discernment, she saw that she met with no response or sympathy.

“Don’t you like my dove, my pretty dove?” Jeanie looked from one to the other, her expression bewildered.

“My angel!” burst from the lips of Elinor, then looking towards her husband, said—“you must leave me her.”

“No! she will be taken from us both, and placed with my Sister Jane.”

“No! no!” said Elinor, in suffocated tones. “You cannot do this; you may sacrifice me in your cold-blooded malice, but I *will* have my child!”

“May I put my dove in your bosom, mamma,” lisped little Jeanie.

“No! go away, child! go away! mamma don’t love birds to-day. Elinor awaited her husband’s reply.”

“You must conform to my wishes without opposition regarding the child. By acceding, you will find your own situation made independent; but if you thwart my plans you do it at your loss.”

“Sir, the law will provide for me if you refuse me what is due my marriage claims.”

“A private settlement might be better for you, madam.”

“Is there no appeal from this?—I mean for Jeanie?”

“None! my resolutions are formed.”

“You cannot do this cruel thing?”

The change in the appearance and manner of the cast-off wife would have once unmanned her resolute but suffering husband. Had she once plead as now—had she even done a guilty thing—one whisper of feeling, one tone of agony in her voice, would have melted him; but year after year she had benumbed the vitality of his love. Had she excited his anger to violence, he could have forgiven her; but she had withered the root of his affection, and the proud woman’s portion was nought but contempt and desertion.

Rising, more composed, she said :

“Are your plans matured? When do you act upon them?”

“Immediately.”

Mr. Miller did not seek the effect of his reply, but left hastily. He stopped, hearing a groan—a fall. He returned; his wife lay in a swoon upon the carpet.

“Jeanie,” he exclaimed, “call the servants—your grandmother.” He rang the bell violently, and left the house.

CHAPTER VI.

IT had been a gloomy, rainy day. Mr. Miller had occupied himself in his city home in preparation for his departure for Europe. He sat long by the window casement of his room, looking down abstractedly upon the scarcely discernible street-lamps, for thick was the mist and black the atmosphere. The rain briskly showered the windowpanes—his only music the splurging sound of city gutters, the pattering on muddy pavements. He thought of a rain in the country, where the freshened green of nature seems to make the soul more green—where flowers, with their rose and violet cups hold up their drooping heads, to wash their faces, like young children for a holiday—where the birds dip their beaks in leafy goblets, darting in and out, shaking their gold and purple feathers, as if for them each drop of jewelled water sparkled, each ray of sunlight, quivering through the leaves, was a rainbow for their crests. But what to him was now the most beautiful gushing from Heaven's fount, though like countless rays of sunlit silver, it shimmered down over the blossom-laden boughs of his old loved home. About his heart there was a flood of feeling welling upwards from a deeper source, and darkness brooding over his spirit, gloomier than that of the most murky sky.

He had taken leave of his son, and resolved to go to the chamber of his little girl, which required him to pass his wife's apartment. Walking lightly by, he entered, with hushed footsteps, the room where his darling lay. He found

her asleep, hugging her doll. Around it twined her dimple arms, her lips parted, breathing softly.

It was a cherub face—the mother's beauty—yet so dove-like ! Years might intervene before he saw her again. A new life would open upon her : she might be homesick, and pine for her mother—she might die in his absence, bereft of both parents ; and she might be saved, and live a useful, rational woman. With a judicious education he hoped for a good result. Bred himself in the country, its homely pleasures were associated with all his purest, sweetest emotions. He would have his little Jeanie taste the same ; and under the guidance of holiness and truth, be all that he had once imagined his lost Elinor. And yet, as she lay there—with her hair waving about her brow—asleep, clasping tenderly the waxen image, did there not seem enough of the angel to be trusted to its own sweet nature, and indulgent affection ? At that moment he might have yielded to a mother's pleadings ; but passing the doorway, he saw the now odious face of her grandmother, seeking her own room. It was enough. Elinor might have looked once like the little Jeanie. The husband, with his embittered soul, his bitter memories, might have erred ; but his confidence, once so holy, in a wife and mother, had fled.

Agonized with the parting, he knelt by the couch of his child, then with a light kiss on the lily brow, he left her with protecting angels—passing out and onwards in the now darkened hall. He felt a stranger and intruder there. As he went again by the chamber of his wife, all seemed still : no sound was heard but the still pattering of the rain-drops, the sighing of the wind. The light glimmered in the parlor adjoining her sleeping apartment: the wind blew a gust, sending against the window-panes a blind, causing a crash of the glass, and pouring in of the rain. He impulsively walked into the room, and closed the shutters quietly,

as if he feared to waken an infant child, instead of an unloved wife. As he left the casement, the door of Elinor's room opened, when she came out, in déshabille, wrapped in a shawl, her hair unconfined, and her eyes staring wildly, not as if roused from sleep, but as if alarmed. Seeing her husband, she sank on a couch with a groan. At that moment he had nearly relented, and drawn the sufferer to his bosom.

Elinor had not slept, but sat until the hour of one, contemplating her fate—the mortification awaiting her, the doom she had brought upon herself, and for the first time reflected. As her husband was about to part for ever from her, she realized his goodness ; asking herself why she had not valued his affection and kept it. Why had she believed him so far beneath her ?—why had she not looked at his nobleness, instead of his birth ? Why had she not studied his characteristics, and tried to overcome her prejudices ; and worse, blind fool ! why had she felt so secure of the idolatry of one she had ever seemed to scorn—enduring him as if with loathing—finally bidding him leave her alone. Her pride had then rebelled at the thought of the gossip that would ensue with the revelation of the truth, and she determined to keep secret their alienation, and preserve a show of conjugal good will. Well, in this hour of wretchedness, did she remember the husband's frigid assent to her terms, and henceforth the scrupulous adherence to the promise.

The world and her admirers had demanded too much of her time, to note that the man of ice was turning into stone ; and that in return he was framing proposals for her. While anglers, with glittering bait, sat at her side, her smiles their reward, she thought not that he, to whom she paid “respect,” could be unreasonable—craving more.

But to-night she sat hearing the rain—the beatings of a guilty conscience—seeing the substance in the past ; the

black shadows of a future ; and knew that henceforth she was a cast-off wife—wedded, yet widowed—that she would, by a community that had yielded her deference, be looked at, gazed at, speculated upon—worse—suspected.

For moments the husband stood viewing the abandonment of her attitude ; her crushed look ! She seemed younger, more requiring of protection. He fancied, in the brief time since they last met, that suffering had sunken her cheek, and that her eyes were hollow and tear-stained. Looking up, she said :—

“ Why have you come here to add to my misery ? ”

“ I did not know that you were up. I came to see our child ; but as we have again met, we need not grudge each other a civil parting.”

He held forth his hand. Hers was not raised, but lay near him on the sofa. He took it in his. For more than two years a finger of hers had not come in contact with his own. The small one trembled violently. He clasped it as if in a vice, while he exclaimed :—

“ My God ! that I should suffer this ! ”

“ Yet, you will ”

“ Yes, yes, the morrow will come, and another morrow of misery ; but, Elinor, before I go, let me implore you, not for my sake—no, not for mine—but for our little one, that you will not forget the value of a mother’s example.”

“ What will my example be to her ? ”

“ I have taken her from you, not to grieve you ; I feel it a duty which I owe to her. This is a reproach, a heavy one, I grant it ; but the time will come, when she will be affected by your course in life.”

“ And for you ? ”

“ Elinor, I ask henceforth nothing in life of you. I dare not look forward, excepting to another world. That future concerns us both alike. It is almost morning ; you will take

cold here." A smothered "good-bye" passed the lips of the husband. Elinor sank back silently on the sofa pillow. Mr. Miller saw the wretchedness of the action, and added:—

"For the present there is, there can be no change. Years may effect what a shorter period cannot. Now, I have no feeling, no sympathy. I know the source of your agony; but did one latent feeling burn in your breast for me, even though it were akin to love, I could not return it now. It is enough that when you came to these arms a bride, that I believed you loved me, and found myself an object of your loathing."

"My mother," groaned Elinor.

"Yes; in her love of gold, lay the curse. Yet I would have you honor her—it is God's command. I shall leave you provided for. You will find directions for your pecuniary matters, and from me will need no more."

The wind moaned and the skies grew no lighter—but darker as the husband and wife parted. How did they meet again!

CHAPTER VII.

THE difficulty attending the separation of Jeanie from her mother had been foreseen by Mr. Miller, and knowing that she could successfully thwart him, had resolved to buy her acquiescence. He accordingly offered to convey to her half of his estate, upon the conditions that her education during childhood, should be under his direction—although permitted to visit her mother annually, until she attained the age of fifteen, when she would have the liberty of selecting her home with either parent.

Policy determined the wife to accede to the terms proposed, lest by insisting upon her legal rights, she might not only become a loser pecuniarily, but still further incur her husband's displeasure, and perhaps provoke the publicity attendant upon a divorce, which she deprecated.

This matter had been settled in writing between them, without personal conference.

Mrs. Miller resolved to remain for the winter in the lodgings in which she was left.

Little Jeanie had bitterly grieved at parting with Arthur. The son was old enough to feel the situation of his father, and contemplated it with depth of emotion. With solicitude he had for years looked upon the coldness daily increasing ; and often with indignation, as he witnessed the total disregard, and scornful bearing with which his step-mother demeaned herself towards his father ; but the inexperience of the boy anticipated no such painful dénouement.

Kissing away the tears of his little sister, he vowed to make any sacrifice for her happiness—a vow made with boyish fervor, foreseeing not in the future how painful would be the task of its fulfillment.

Before bidding adieu, he led her to her mother. With hysterical weeping she was received.

Holding out her jewelled fingers to the tall boy, so changed, with more feeling than he had ever known her exhibit towards him, she said :

“Arthur, you have been good to little Jeanie. I allowed you to name her ; was not this a proof of my good-will ?”

“I appreciated it, madam.”

“Bid mamma good-bye,” said the little girl, taking her brother’s hand.

“For Jeanie’s sake, may we not be friends ?”

Mrs. Miller took a ring from her finger, and presented it with a smile ; such as once would have made him her slave.

“I cannot accept it.” Arthur retreated.

“I know”—the blood kindling on her cheek—“I have no right to ask your love ; I was too young to assume the relation in which I stood to you, when I took your father’s name, but I am older now.”

“My mother is in heaven. I have no recollection of her, but there was a time when I first saw you—when you came to her home—I felt that she had come back to me. I shall never forget that day—how I had watched for you—how foolish, and yet how glad I was—how I ran to the carriage, my heart bursting with desire to see my mother. But, Mrs. Miller, that was my last dream of one on earth.”

“Why did you not tell me this ?” She felt the boy’s reproaches. “We might have been better friends. I have never disliked you, but you have coldly avoided me. Yes, Arthur, we might have loved each other. Cannot you think kindly of Jeanie’s mother ?”

"Jeanie's mother was my father's wife. If this relation could not make us friends, I know of no tie that can." The face of the boy was turned from his step-mother. "All you or I can say cannot bring him back, or make him happy."

"Have I not enough to contend with," said Mrs. Miller, impatiently, "without these allusions? I have heard enough to know your feelings towards me; but, know this, son of Archibald Miller, that it may lie in my power to show you friendship, when you will not scorn it. I have offered you what I never did another—a pledge of my fidelity."

"You forget, madam! you forget! Did you never offer another fidelity?"

The hot blood rushed to Elinor's temples. "If you have come here," said she, impetuously, "to remind me of obligations, you can go. One word more, and I will forbid your intercourse with Jeanie."

The little girl's arms were now about her brother's neck.

"That would be hard," said Arthur. "Shall I leave Jeanie with you, Mrs. Miller?"

"Yes;" turning from the boy with haughty grace.

With a bow, Arthur passed over the threshold.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE old farm-house where Deacon Selden, or "Grandpa" lived, and where his two daughters, Lucy and Jane were born, was in the same county where Mr. Miller's early days were passed, else the latter might not have found the little pale violet that he took to his home in his young manhood, so soon to lay her beneath the wild blossoms of the soil—emblematic of her sweetness and purity.

It was an antiquated, brown tenement, situated a mile from the village of Meadowbrook, with broad, low rooms, each side of a little square entry, a place just big enough to hold the deacon's hat, and, it might be, another, besides a door-mat. It was a dark place, this entry, but a noisy one when the lion-headed knocker fell a-rapping, not only awaking the quiet household, but, without fail, starting to his feet a small black dog, who barked, keeping time with the iron knocker, until Miss Jane or Keturah Sprunt came to the door. It was a red door, and opened upon a porch with wooden seats, over which arched or peaked a shingle roof, where the honeysuckles climbed, and the sweet-brier roses showered their blossoms, as graciously as if it were instead a marble court. And the yard, through which was a walk of small cobble-stones, where many a Picciola bloomed, was full of bushes—"lalocs," as Grandpa' called them—besides cinnamon, and beautiful damask roses, that never were known to yield more than two full-grown blossoms towards the last of August, faithfully as Jane Selden watered the

bush. It was astonishing how backward these roses were, and how much more these blushing only children were thought of, than the whole family of young cinnamons, who came every spring as plentifully as children to a poor minister. But besides this, there was another yard on the other side of the fence, where the wood was piled, and the well was, with its long pole, and old bucket, swinging thereto ; also a place for poultry to range, and pick up crumbs with permission or without ; having no especial home excepting at roosting time, and then, no matter what the occasion or allurement, even though it might be a fresh arrival of fast young pullets on a pic-nic excursion ; orderly, broad daylight still shining, the solemn hens with old and young strutting roosters, their half-grown, long-legged offspring fluttering and scratching under fences, others flying and straddling over pickets to join the company —all went soberly to bed.

Every one who has ever been in the farm-country of New England, knows what a place it was—how secluded, green, and cosy, the parlor and keeping room, with its simple furniture, and well-ordered propriety ; its books, consisting of the old family Bible, Watts' Hymns, and Pilgrim's Progress, with smaller samples of pious literature, arranged likewise orderly. Neither must we forget in the corner of the last-mentioned room, the tall, wooden clock, reaching from the floor to the ceiling—a Gogmagog to modern inventions—standing like old father Time, solemn and monitory, telling with each point of its steel fingers, each sound of its brazen tongue, each measured intonation of its deep-toned voice, as to and fro, to and fro it swung and ticked, ticked and swung, like a great heart-beating machine, doling out its life-seconds, telling of another moment passed, of eternity neared.

And where else was such a sofa out of New England, as at old Deacon Selden's ? A sofa with big rolling arms, like

a fat aunt's shoulders, under which two ample pillows like babies snuggled, with elevated back and round stomach, the whole covered with flowered chintz, where birds and beasts congregated, and Chinese pagodas, piled under the shade of waving plantains—a zoological, geographical, and botanical chart, for the study of the children in the family, especially at prayer-time ; a sofa ample enough to sit—not companionless—with the fairy shape of eighteen, or when, by a freak of nature, some twenty-five years later, expanded into full blown dimensions ; a sofa good for lolling or napping ; a sofa on which you stayed instead of bounding off like an India-rubber ball when you struck ; where you sunk with a feeling of warm security, "making your mark" as you came out of it—not sliding about on hair like an eel on an ice-pond, or dislocating your spine or collar-bone in the process of making yourself easy ; no—instead, it embodied your idea of sofa comfort, whether enjoyed, *tête-à-tête*, individually or collectively ; inducing a feeling of affectionateness towards it, that remained with you through life, from the time it told its whispering love-tales, to the hour it cosily nestled your babies in its downy corners ; a sofa, to a New Englander, associated with his childhood and maturity, with grandmothers and great-grandmothers ; with his maiden elderly relatives and old fussy uncles, and all the big and little connections that had ever napped on it, tumbled it, and shook it into shape again.

But there was an up-stairs as well as down-stairs at Grandpa' Selden's, and plenty of rooms, not all square or convenient, but enough of them, whether oblong, hexagon, octagon, or catecornered ; and however small or ill-shapen, each had a bed in it for somebody, and all were clean and tidy, for Aunt Jane was housekeeper.

Then there was a garret—not an attic, with servants' rooms and prison windows—but a garret such as a child

never forgets—dearer to memory than all the salons he ever afterwards owns, or visits; where “hiding eoop” was played, and “tag,” “King George,” and the “Barberry bush”—where the rats scampered, and danced jigs at night, and children ransacked in the day-time—where bins of corn were kept, and walnuts and butternuts stored away in the fall—where the boys hung their pop-corn ears, and grand-ma’ her herbs—where old family portraits, by daub artists, were stored, and old rubbish kept for generations, moth-eaten books, swing cradles, and broken chairs, and all else fractured in limb, bone, or sinew—where rope swings were hung from crazy old beams, laden with cracked and broken utensils—where thousands of nondescript things were hid in dark corners, out of which children made spooks and hob-goblins—and, lastly, where most unexpectedly and mysteriously, as if brought by genii from regions unknown, are found in old hats and fire-buckets, little blind-eyed black and white kittens, around which purrs the cat of the household—all scaring, thrilling, yet delighting, exciting the wish with a juvenile company, to go into the garret again.

But in whatever state this rat and child play-ground, its counterpart was not seen below, at Grandpa’ Selden’s, though no room equalled Aunt Jane’s for neatness. Hers was a cosy spot, where a fly did not dare settle himself, though by way of exploration an adventurer might take a chance peep within, and pass out, sparing a brush of his tiny wings against her snowy curtains. It made you think of Jane Selden as vividly as a sight of her spotless forehead, or little white ears. It looked Jane all over. The very pillow cases in their purity, brought to mind the white cheek with its smooth, silken hair, nicely capped, that lay upon them, and left them untumbled. The toilette-table, with its muslin covering, its pincushion, and stuck letters, read “Jane.” The little vase of early flowers betokened Jane in her unpre-

tending sweetness, and every drawer, gown, collar, or apron, was as good a likeness of her as a faithful daguerreotype—for they were all plainly arranged, and like herself, spotless. The tiny shoes that hung in their cupboard casings, were like nothing else, or larger than Jane Selden's little cotton-hosed foot ; and to have ever given Jane's room for twelve hours to any one less pure, less neat and precise, would have seemed a sacrilege. Opposite hers was one affording a melancholy contrast, but as good a picture of its occupant, Mr. Zebedee Flint.

Grandpa and grandma slept down stairs, and so did Keturah Sprunt.

It was a large farm—Deacon Selden's—and worked “by the halves”—grandpa and Zebedee not doing much; the first in consequence of old age, and the latter from inactivity, and other ailments, which seemed chronics, though not affecting his appetite, or general health. He was not young, being on the shady side of forty; but had always excited the sympathy of grandma, in consequence of being an “orphan,” and having been humored when he was little—therefore little was demanded of him. He had been a member of the family for ten years, expecting to get into business, but never having any luck that way, it was feared that he never would. He had not been bred a farmer, and his father having been like himself, “unlucky,” there was little or no money in the family; and as he found the world inhospitable, living around without it, he came to make the deacon a visit. Everybody knew, “it wasn’t,” as he said, “so easy to get into business”—especially when no one offered it to him, which in Zebedee’s case, seemed not likely ever to take place, as he habitually expressed his fears that he was “not equal to any exertion.” His surname of Flint, was often lost sight of, and he had remained so long a bachelor, it was hardly supposed he would ever bestow it upon

any one else ; consequently, it was slighted by people in general.

Zebedee was not a handsome man, and yet could not be called unimpressible in his exterior—an effect partly owing to his habiliments, and the way he wore them. His coat was invariably snuff color, and his—what shall we call them ? by no name suggesting the idea of kneebuckles, or silken hose, for Zebedee Flint was not exactly an “old school gentleman”—neither would any modern tailor recognize in his outward man anything belonging to his professional calling. We must, therefore, delicately hint that these ambiguous moulds, in which he was run, were of indigo blue, always tight and short, giving his attenuated figure, a “fell away” expression.

Miss Betsey Washburn made his clothes, and either from some lack of skill, or some fanciful idea of airiness, she imparted to his coat tails a looseness, which ill accorded with the tightness below.

But Mr. Zebedee Flint and his apparel were as much incorporated as his soul and body; and no one who had accidentally seen the last, in a state of divorcement from their mortal part, could have been made to believe that he was not somewhere thereabouts. His hair was scant, and of a number of shades all darkening as he grew older, to iron grey; his skin, owing to pill taking, to which he was addicted, of a nankeen color. His mouth was “like the Flints’;” grandma said, but its peculiarities the reader can best imagine. He could make it large to any extent, but ever failed to contract it; it was a mouth discernible and capacious, and a mouth full of teeth of all sizes and patterns; it was a mouth under his nose—nearly, and fell short of his ears, and whether twisted, open, or shut, was a mouth to be seen and not forgotten. Its expression seldom varied, and resembled that of a cat-fish. He was rarely

known to smile ; though something approaching to a twinkle was seen in his eye ; and a slight convulsion of the gills, when he felt himself in the atmosphere of the deacon's daughter.

Energy could not safely be called one of his characteristics, it being chiefly exhibited in his purposes. In action, he generally failed. For fishing and hunting he showed some zeal and perseverance ; but for the former, he cared not whether he caught trout or pumpkin-seed ; and preferred to shoot rats rather than any other game. He prided himself on being a good shot—else he would not have aimed, if slyly, at Jane.

He felt as sure of her, as if she was a bloody crow, coming over a corn-field—his spoil. He felt the strength of his ammunition, and confidence in his unerring aim ; but he liked to watch his victim, to fancy her escaping from his trap, while he glided cautiously, softly after her, seeing her with his grey twinkling eyes, anticipating the time when he would clutch her.

It was his day and night dream, how he should catch Jane.

But this was Mr. Flint's private business ; he did not talk of it publicly, as he did of making a fortune, despairing only to the old people, whom he kept in a state of lively sympathy, and had done for ten years, they hoping some day he would "turn to and work."

So year after year he vegetated at the farm, with uncertain prospects—often thinking, he would set up a tin store, or study law, where he could earn his salt, though Keturah knew he never would the pepper and mustard she put on his back. The bachelor was subject to lumbago.

Between Zebedee and Keturah there was ever an undeclared war in agitation, animosity perhaps engendered by their dissimilarity. Keturah being smart, voluble, and

demonstrative; and though the help of the family, was no small or inconsiderable personage in it. She could, she avowed, clear a ten-railed fence, with a live rooster under each arm, while Mr. Flint was wondering at the foot how he should get over, and "tackle every critter in the barn," while the old bachelor was heading the turkeys to get there, they generally taking umbrage at the red hand-kerchief that streamed from his somewhat luxurious coat tails.

Keturah too, professed to despise ailing people, being herself sound in bone and limb. She had no charity for complaints, much less for silent anguish, preferring, she said, yells and roars, to small whines and short grunts; and would rather hear Parson Longyarn preach to "ninthly," than to hear morning, noon, and night how Mr. Flint felt—if his feelings "wasn't agreeable," it was none of her business, and "to his own disgrace."

Mr. Zebedee Flint did not profess to have much bodily strength. Keturah did.

Keturah Sprunt was, by general consent, the main-stay of the family; doing the work, besides making butter and cheese for market. She was also ready to wait on the table, or sit down to it, as she liked best; she finished washing before breakfast; and was ready for a quilting or apple-fee in the afternoon. She could provide a dinner for any number of people, and entertain the company after arrival. She was all this, and more, besides being a buxom, red cheeked, good looking damsel of twenty-three. The old people depended upon her; and Jane, being used to her officiousness and garrulity, appreciated her good qualities, and paid respect to her "flesh and blood," which was not despisable, old Pharaoh Sprunt having been a "likely, well-to-do-butcher," and much thought of in killing time.

CHAPTER IX.

JANE SELDEN has been absent for a few days, but is now on her way with little Jeanie Miller to the farm. The latter became quiet after parting with her mother, comforted with the promise of making her a visit the following season. She has ventured to take a peep out of her little French hat, at the beautiful hills, and at the sheep and cows the steam-engine has scared up, and sent galloping over hedges and through pastures, and at the clear streams, that looked to her like mighty rivers.

As yet, she has scarcely dared to look at Aunt Jane, as papa has bade her call her new protector, for she has not forgotten that she is a "prim old maid," and Jeanie thinks that is everything bad out of a menagerie.

But the prim aunt gave her an apple, with a smile. She then glanced at the figure beside her. The little neat body in a black dress and straw bonnet made upon her, altogether, an agreeable impression. She wondered, in her child-reverie, if, after all, "prim old maid" did not mean something very sweet and pretty. The smile had won her.

It was such a smile as a child loves; for it was born of the heart, and inspired Jeanie to ask many childish questions. But the cars were noisy, and Aunt Jane had not a loud or strong voice. She did not encourage little Jeanie to talk, but drew her head on to a soft cambric handkerchief, which she laid on her lap, telling her that her hair would look nicer if it was cut short.

Meanwhile, Jane Selden was trying to overcome her prejudice against the child, which she might not have had, but for her resemblance to her mother. She, as well as her parents, had suffered much grief from the unhappy marriage of Mr. Miller, and to assume the guardianship of the child of his wife cost her much effort.

But Jane was governed by a sense of duty rather than feeling. She had sensibility on some points, but one who knew her well would not ask her what she preferred to do, but what she thought was best.

Jeanie is glad to reach the farm, and gaily trips over the grass and stones, her big wondering eyes looking upon all objects about her. There is no need of an announcement, for the little black dog is barking (his daily duty, for salary indefinite), at which the little girl screams, and is hushed by the prim Aunt, who shakes her forefinger at "naughty, noisy Mink."

The ploughing in the fields was a novel sight to her, and the great staring oxen another; but when she looked through the woods, down the hill into an opening, she saw a brook, which gave her childish heart a leap; for it was like herself—a dancing, merry thing. She felt an undefined sympathy for it; she wanted to play, skip with it, and sing like it, for it made childish, mirthful music—that laughing, glittering, silver, little brook.

It was full of bright stones, that sparkled in the sun, which, with the running water, fastened the attention of little Jeanie. The grass was green (it was the last of May), and the leaves were all out, fresh as if just varnished and painted, and the birds were singing, when the little girl went up the walk under the porch. She had made up her mind that she should like the country.

But when she came within doors, led by Aunt Jane, and an old lady took off her spectacles to look at her—kissing

her and calling her, "little dear," she could not "be polite," as mamma had daily taught her as the greatest lesson, she was so queer looking, and shook her head so ; but before she had done looking at grandma, Keturah had caught her about the waist, and lifting her from the floor, whirled her around like a top, while she asked her if she was the "city young un." This she bore very well; but when the fat girl sat her down, and then stood at a distance from her, her arms a-kimbo, and laughed loudly, exclaiming at her short slip and ruffles, asking her if cloth was "skars in York," Jeanie was indignant, and turned away, only to encounter a big brown dog, who smelled of her, and coolly settled himself, after shaking his shaggy hide, on her little feet. With a scream, that brought Aunt Jane from her bandboxes and bundles, the little girl cried for help ; but before she could recover from her fright the rough Keturah had mounted her, in defiance of alarm, upon the back of old Vulcan, and thus she rode to supper—her first meal in the brown farm-house.

"Keturah, you must not tease the child—remember, she is tired. Take your place by me, Jeanie ; when your turn comes you will be helped. Where is father and Cousin Zebedee ?" Aunt Jane sat down at the waiter.

"They'll come—the horn's blowed—when the seed's in—and Mr. Flint, I guess, afore." Keturah seated herself. "Here they be, now." The sound of heavy feet were heard through the kitchen, when little Jeanie was taken by Aunt Jane to greet grandpa.

A good old man was Grandpa Selden. How kind he looked, with his bent shoulders, and pleasant smile, as he took Jeanie on his knee, and smoothed over her hair with his large brown hands. She was not his Lucy's child, but she was Arthur's little sister, and Archibald's little girl ; and he was sorry for her, for he knew how their parents were situated.

A different greeting she received from Zebedee, who gave her a side look out of his grey eyes, and turned them on Jane, to whom he said, "how'd-do," and sat down to supper, displaying seeming indifference to her arrival, to any one not accustomed to the mechanism of his mouth.

"Have you been well, cousin?"

"Had some toothache," answered the bachelor, filling the cavern exposed with a doughnut.

Zebedee claimed cousinship to the Seldens, though it was difficult to trace it, owing to its distance. Grandpa gave little Jeanie a chuck under the chin before he came to the table, where all were waiting for the blessing—she, meanwhile staring about her in every strange face, until she met a corresponding glance, when the deep blue orbs would fall with a shy look, showing more distinctly their long lashes and her delicate profile—to rise again, scanning the old people and the bachelor, extending her wandering gaze until it had faithfully absorbed "General Washington," "The Battle of Lexington," and lastly the image of the noisy, good-natured, Keturah.

Zebedee was slow in passing the waffles, and the child was very hungry, which all but the bachelor seemed suddenly to recollect, when her plate was filled to her satisfaction by grandma, who knew that the "little dear had rode a good ways."

We need not say that the supper was a very still one, for it generally is in the country, where children are brought up to be seen and not heard at table. Awful is too apt to be the silence in the most social family on such an occasion. And yet "our Josiah and Gabriel are so bashful and sheepish, going on fifteen!" As strange a fact as if a prisoner chained from infancy to a block, should, on liberation, suddenly walk gracefully and with self-possession.

Little Jeanie had been too much amused since her

arrival, to betray emotion ; all had been confusion and joy, but now every face was lengthened by the solemn exercise of eating ; and so fearful was the sudden change—the awe of the occasion—by the time she had taken her part in it, she choked : but not until Mr. Zebedee Flint looked at her, did she burst in a child's cry.

Propriety now vanished with the sympathy that filled to bursting, three, at least of the kind hearts at the table, and voices were suddenly tuned, as if by the sweet harps of angels, so softly and tenderly they addressed the stranger child.

"Give the young one to me," cried Keturah, snatching from the table her untouched food. "Your long faces are enough to give her cramps. Come along, and we'll have a turn on the Jew's harp." Before an objection could be raised, the lawless Miss Sprunt had carried off the little new comer, affording those within the satisfaction of soon hearing a merry laugh from the child, before she was out of sight.

No one but Zebedee could eat after she left. Jane was restless, and showed it in her frequent glances towards the window. This burst of tears she feared augured trouble, and felt the responsibility devolving upon her. While ruminating over her plans, rather than enjoying her meal, like a streak of sunshine the little girl burst into the apartment, dragging after her a young goat, which Keturah had tied by the neck, while the child nearly smothered it in her wild delight.

It was a new, but not unpleasant surprise to the quiet household, saving Mr. Flint, who was nervous about quick motions. Clapping his hands to his ears, with a face of woe, he laid himself back upon his chair, looking at Jane, with an expression which visibly said : "Am I doomed ?"

Both the little lambs, as grandpa called Jeanie and her

companion, were coaxed towards him, and much to Zebedee's relief, soon out of the doorway, and over the meadow, with salt to feed the woolly favorite.

Grandma went to the door with her knitting, to look after them, her head shaking, but with a soft loving light in her hazel eyes, that accorded well with her parted silver hair. "Little dear," said she, "how pretty she looks! I hope the deacon won't take her into the wet grass."

"She ought to have worn her thick shoes and bonnet," said Aunt Jane, commencing to wash the tea-cups, with a little mop. Jane was very choice of her white fingers.

"I don't know how I shall be able to endure the noise." Zebedee looked imploringly at Jane. "Quiet is so necessary to my complaints."

"You are somewhat nervous, perhaps, to-night." The maiden wiped a tea-cup, as if she meant to do her duty to that as well as her pupil.

"Jane," taking hold of one end of her towel, with a spasmodic twitch, "I believe I am as patient as anybody; and I don't know that there is any one who needs fortitude more; but if children and sheep are to interfere with me, no matter what my state is, why, Jane, I may be obliged to quit."

"We must remember, Zebedee, children are children," interposed grandma, taking up a stitch, "and that lambs are new to the little dear. I remember when you was a baby, and how you liked your ma's cat."

"I think you are mistaken," said Zebedee, tartly; "I never liked anything small or young, unless," looking at Jane, "it was grown. A cat! what use could I have for a cat? Children ought to be broke of such things. I never expect to have another good night's sleep in this house."

"The child will rest with me," said Jane, with her sweetest smile, "and cannot disturb you."

The announcement nearly shook the bachelor from his chair. Striking his fist into one of his hollow cheeks, giving an ugly look to his mouth, he exclaimed :—

“It don’t signify, it will wear on you—and she so small—and troublesome—bringing in sheep !”

At this moment Keturah opened the door of the room, and seated herself with her full weight on the round of the sofa, and in a broad laugh, exclaimed :—

“Where do you think the young un is ? As I’m alive, she’s got Dick, and the goat has broke loose and run up stairs, and she’s after it ; and I expect nothing else, but the critter is racing into Mr. Flint’s room.”

“Do I understand,” said Zebedee, with a sudden start to his thin legs, “I am to be driven out of my own premises, with no regard paid to the preservation of my property or my health ? Jane, this is too much !—this is too much !”

At this, Keturah burst into another lond laugh, and before Jane could seek the child, a tumbling, clattering noise was heard upon the stairway, as if an army of goats were on the descent ; when the next moment, the gay little Jeanie appeared in the door, dragging her new pet after her, his feet entangled in a fish-line, bobs, hooks, and a broken pole attached, though not yet arrived. Her face radianut with the excitement, she rushed up to her new guardian, giving an account of her chase and the exploits of the kid.

“But you must not bring the creature into the house again, Jeanie,” replied Aunt Jane, pleasantly, attempting to disengage the feet of the animal from the line.

“The small wretch !” Zebedee looked at the new comer.

The child’s eyes expanded to their full size, doubtful whether the man meant the epithet for her or the goat.

“I say it is a troublesome wretch !” said Zebedee, keeping his eyes on Jeanie’s now indignant face.

Bursting into a passion of tears, she threw herself into the

lap of Jane, and with one arm around the neck of the animal, sobbed : "I am not a wretch, nor Dickey an't a wretch ; but he is—he is, and I hate him."

"Do you hear that, Jane ? do you hear that ? the obnoxious, aggravating, small thing !"

"Jeanie, Jeanie, my child, be calm ; this is naughty—you must not talk so—you are angry. Come with me, and we will tie Dick up."

The child trembled with anger.

"Let him run," said grandpa, now coming in. "I will catch him for her to-morrow. Don't cry, little girl—don't cry, little girl."

"Here's your tackling," said Keturah, spitefully to Zebedee. "I only wish I'd broke it in a hundred pieces !"

"Keturah !" said Aunt Jane, reprovingly.

"'Tury," said grandma, "that an't proper !"

"Yes, it is—if my constitution is ruined," said Zebedee.

"You must not go again," said Aunt Jane, "into Mr. Flint's room. He is very particular, and not well, my dear ; be careful not to offend him."

With the dignity and grace of a woman, Jeanie drew up her little figure, the tears still in her eyes. "I have done nothing to make him angry. I did not know that it was his room, when I went for Dickey ; but I am sure I don't want to go near it again, nor him either, as long as I live."

"Do you hear that ? do you hear that ?" said Zebedee. "Can't I speak to you, Jane ?—something must be done to settle me—my head's beginning—I shan't be fit to live, getting so upset."

"I will attend to you, cousin," smoothing the child's hair, and wiping her eyes, "after I put Jeanie to bed."

"When she's a-bed—when she's a-bed." The bachelor chuckled, as if there was salvation for him yet. With a sudden start he turned again towards Jane.

"Some woman's coming." Putting on his hat, he pretended to be going, but finally sat down in the porch, and being engaged looking at the oxen, didn't appear to see the females who passed him, though he was so situated as to hear their conversation.

That night he went to the singing meeting after Jane, though no appointment had been made.

It was a habit he had, going to meeting after Jane, though always as if for the first time, and as if he were not used to the road leading thereto, occupying himself sauntering along, in picking up stones and throwing them at the grasshoppers, absent minded, having, however, the singular good fortune to arrive, by some undefined means of calculation, at the moment she came forth. After reaching the outskirts, he gave Jane his elbow, with a sudden and sharp poke. She generally took it, knowing the significance of the attention, and when to take advantage of it, and under how much daylight. She could not be blamed—his civilities were pointed.

He seemed to know her movements and engagements, whatever they were, and so well was it understood in the village that she would be provided for, that there was not a bachelor or widower, having an eye to the maiden virtues of Jane Selden, who would have presumed to offer her attention, while the grey-eyed bachelor was picking up stones by the town pump, or making astronomical observations by the road-side.

Feeling somewhat anxious about the charge she had left, Jane Selden sought her chamber, after her return, and finding the little girl asleep, was comforted, though somewhat annoyed, that Keturah should have put her to bed without a night-cap. The glossy ringlets of the child, though beautiful and fleecy as amber clouds, still might soil the purity of the linen upon which they lay; and the little

head, heavy with its slumbering weight, was raised, to fall insensible, upon the bosom of Jane. Kissing the closed lids and flushed cheek of the weary child, she drew about them a cap of delicate muslin, and left the infant slumberer in her peaceful purity, and went below stairs—to console Mr. Zeb-dee Flint.

The next day commenced the trials of Jane ; not from her dislike of children, or her lack of patience, though her life till the age of three and thirty, had been free from the slightest care or confusion. She was as systematic as a piece of exquisite machinery, and as sensitive in all matters disturbing her private arrangements. Yet so rigid were her principles, that she held it a matter of duty, to be governed by them at any sacrifice. Her trials had their origin in the excitable temperament, and the totally neglected education of her new protégée.

While petted, amused, and caressed, the child was contented at home, with the studies and pursuits chosen for her, until she found her way into the woods, when no farm limits, or environs could confine her within them; and before the expiration of six weeks, neither rabbit nor squirrel had made freer explorations into all paths, and coverts, than the now wild untutored Jeanie. Her will and determination at first mastered all about her ; while she pursued her own course in defiance of restraint.

Her volatile disposition did not trouble Jane so much, as her disregard of motives in her conduct. In her education, she endeavored to set before her a standard of right for her imitation, which she enforced by illustrations from Scripture ; and was disappointed that she could not at once accomplish her purpose ; while the faults of her pupil, were constantly presented to her in an exaggerated light by the querulous bachelor. She saw that the sensibilities of Jeanie were acute ; and that feeling mastered her nature,

which caused her often to repress her own tenderness, to check its ungoverned flow in the child. It was her great aim, in the formation of her character, to subdue her controlling passions—bringing them under the guidance of reason and fixed principle; and to lead her to look for direction from a Heavenly teacher.

CHAPTER X.

LITTLE JEANIE had now reached the age of eight years ; yet her preceptor sighed over her waywardness, who in the meantime had, notwithstanding, gained the love of all hearts around her, excepting that of her tormentor and evil genius.

With the old couple she was an idol ; ruling them with her “pretty wilfulness ;” and with Keturah, was the inspirer of fun and merriment.

To throw aside her gay dresses, had been to the little girl a great trial, and to keep in order and precise arrangement, those furnished her, was not a less one ; to effect which she had often lost a meal, and been deprived of many a wood-stroll—a conflict begun in tears and passion though ending in submission and penitence. Jeanie’s troubles were the harder to bear from the taunts and ridicule of Zebedce, who invariably remembered her offences and their punishment.

The passion for dress and dancing, seemed inherent in her nature. She sang too, as gleefully as a bird, and with as little cultivation, her love for music being intense and natural. Although conquered by the decision of her preceptor, in the change of her attire, an accidental sight of a fanciful dress sent her by her mother, revived her love of display.

Locked in her room, she arrayed herself in the flounced blue silk, carefully adjusting the lace frills about her arms,

on which she clasped her cast-aside ornaments. After dressing her feet conformably, she threw over her head a mantle of lace, and tripped down the back stairs, and fleet as a fairy, into the kitchen, to first exhibit herself secretly to Keturah, whom she cautioned by a "hush!" and then out of doors, to scud into the hay-field among the men, by whom she was greeted with a shout.

She could not as usual tumble in the hay, so she concluded to proceed to the village, though warned not to take the walk without permission or company.

She was a general pet with her playmates, and ever felt confident of approval among them. The compunctions of conscience which had troubled her while on the farm, now fled, knowing she should be an object of admiration and wonder. She regretted that her aunt had cut off all her beautiful curls.

Jeanie was received on the piazza of a rude dwelling by a gay milliner, who felt much complimented and delighted with the child's condescension in visiting her, "so divinely dressed."

Her skill in dancing was already known, she having taken every favorable occasion to exhibit it; her little feet touching with sparrow lightness the turf or floor on which she trod, singing her own accompaniment, while she amused the untaught villagers with her fashionable steps, and airs.

But never until to-day, had she been in full feather for the display. That she was a runaway, from the sober family of Deacon Selden, many that saw her, suspected; but none could help viewing with admiration the fascinating child. Thoughtless of all but a love of mischief, she attracted around her a circle who had caught a glimpse of her, as she went up the steps of the shop, known as that of Mrs. Higgins, the milliner of Meadow Brook.

The crowd at first composed only her playmates; ther

such as were passing, until unconsciously little Jeanie was dancing and singing before a gathering of people, the half of whom were peeping at her through the windows and doors of the rooms, considered public to the village.

She forgot all else in the enjoyment, not knowing, in her thoughtless mood, she was in a situation humbling to herself, and her friends. Her look was upon the floor, she regarding not the universal stare upon her, seeing nothing but the glittering halo which envelops a child's fancy, her eyes moistened by the pearly drops oozing from the font of a child's pure heart, her fairy feet springing lightly as a bird from bough to bough, on the wind of breezy motion. Thus she kept time to her own sweet warblings.

In the meantime, a gentleman was peering among the crowd for a man he there sought. Indifferently his eyes fell upon the object of attention. The vision enthralled him as he watched it silently.

Little Jeanie looked up to meet the gaze of the children who had begged her to dance for them, when instead, she saw that of a motley collection, and among the rest the fixed look of a pair of eyes, not admiringly, but reprovingly upon her. Their earnest expression, their large, mournful beauty, set beneath arches of heavy black, in a face strongly marked, impressed even the child Jeanie. The gentleman might have been eight and twenty. He was a traveller, and stopping at the village inn.

As she ceased dancing, a shout arose from the boys ; while clapping their hands, they cried : "Don't stop—go on, go on."

Frightened to find herself so situated, alarmed and reproved by the look of the stranger, sudden consciousness overwhelmed her. With a deep blush, she felt that she was doing wrong. Covering her eyes, she burst into tears, then darting through the crowd, caught up her mantle, and throw-

ing it over her head, attempted to go through the doorway, saying, "No, no—I must go home."

But in vain she attempted egress, while "dance for us more—dance for us more," was the only reply to her eager entreaties to be released.

"Stand aside," said the gentleman, quietly, but decidedly, "and let the little girl pass." The tone was one of command, yet courteous. The rude villagers looked upon the speaker, and parted on each side, when with the gentleman, she walked out. Not daring to look up, Jeanie felt that he was beside her.

"Tell me," said the latter, walking across the village green, "are you a little actress, or a runaway?"

"I am so sorry I came." Tears streamed from the eyes of Jeanie.

"Why?"

"I only wanted to see the little Higgins, and there were so many people! Oh, I am afraid to go home. What shall I do?" With hasty steps the child flew rather than walked into a narrow secluded path that led out of the village, still crying. Looking up suddenly, she said: "Are you going with me, to tell Aunt Jane? because—because—if you do"—

"What if I do?"

"Only don't tell Mr. Flint—he will tease me so."

"Then you don't think you ought to feel badly?"

"Oh, yes, yes—I don't want to go home." Jeanie and her companion had now reached a quiet, grassy lane. Seeing a log, she sat upon it—covering her eyes, still saying, "Oh, I can't go home."

"What is your name?" said the young man, viewing her distressed little face, while he took her hand.

"Jeanie Miller. My papa has gone to Europe."

"And your mother?"

"She didn't go away with papa."

The fingers were dropped. "I thought I had seen your eyes before. Can you find your way home, or shall I go with you?"

"I have done so wrong."

"It is half the battle, my little girl, to feel this; go and tell your friends so. Have you not courage?"

"I wish I had my old dress on. I did not think I could hate this so."

He felt that he had seen the child of Elinor Castleman.

With earnestness he met the glittering eyes. "My little girl, I know your papa. He would have been grieved to have seen you, as I have to-day. You had better go home, and take the consequences of your folly. I must bid you good-bye here. I am going away in the stage this evening."

"And will you see my papa again?"

"Perhaps so."

Jeanie's tears fell afresh. The gentleman knew her fears and pressing the little hand, said, "Don't think that I shall tell any tales of you."

"Only if you do, tell him I am sorry."

The gentleman smiled, and answering affirmatively, parted with her. Afterwards looking back, he saw her slowly walking onwards, stopping to cry, but still going on.

Jeanie had not proceeded far before she heard a quick, shuffling step behind her, when by her side appeared the bachelor, who had been to the village as usual, after the arrival of the mail, for a "business opening."

"Hurrah! Jiminy!" he cried, as he reached her, "I'll be snooped if this ain't Miss Jinny Miller, that I've heerd of down to the village. Come, Miss Lady-bug, how did the performance go off? If I ain't disgraced to be seen with you! Won't you catch it! I was just going to tell of you, but

it's better that I've caught you slying along home. Who was that man you was cackling to? I'll tell of you—I'll tell of you. So you had better hurry up, and make up no lies."

Jeanie's penitence was now overwhelmed in anger. With a face scarlet with passion, she clutched from the ground, a root of pig-weed, and flung it with force into the face of Zebedee. "Take that; I don't care what you say of me. I mean to tell the truth myself, and I don't care if I have put your eyes out, you meddling, blind old buzzard."

The act and speech performed, Jeanie took to her fleet footsteps for safety, knowing that the bachelor's care of his joints and their tight casings, would prevent his overtaking her. It was now late, and she knew that supper would be ready on her arrival; and the family waiting for her.

But instead of anger and reproaches, she met what was more grievous. Aunt Jane was in tears; and grandpa and grandma looked sadly, but not angrily at her.

The little quivering lips could not utter the child's speeches she had framed, but like a condemned culprit she stood at the door weeping, old Vulcan licking her hands, and little Mink barking—for she had come over the door-mat.

"Take your seat at the table." Jane wiped her eyes, looking at Jeanie.

"You must be tired," said grandma, taking a pinch of snuff, her head shaking worse.

"Land alive! let her take off her frock," said Keturah.

"No; I prefer that she keeps it on until bedtime. Sit down."

"Julius Cæsar! do let her unrig before Mr. Flint comes, he's so aggravating."

"I can't eat," said Jeanie, "please let me go up stairs."

"Set down to the table"—and Jeanie sat down; and was there, in her blue dress and flounces, full of burs and

thistles, when the bachelor arrived, bringing, in his hand, a root of pigweed. He came in, shaking it, scattering the dirt from the root.

That Zebedee should so offend good taste, and the nice propriety of the family, disturbed the equanimity of Jane ; but he made no explanation. At last, putting down the clump, he stood, with his hands in his pockets, looking at Jeanie, and at her festooned dress—looking her through with his snapping eyes, as if there was no feeling, no sensibility, to be shocked in so “small a thing.”

Feeling the glance of ire, the derisive smile that succeeded it, as the grey eyes lowered upon her soil-stained stockings, seeing the red eyelids of her kind preceptor, and the grave looks of the old people, not knowing what was to follow—how could she eat ? and yet how much they offered her ; how grandpa heaped her plate, and how attentive was the mad Keturah, who would have saved her every emotion of shame.

Yet she did not cry ; she might have done so, but Zebedee was staring still.

The long meal, so agonizing to Jeanie, was at last concluded ; yet there was no release for her ; she must sit up to prayers, while no word was said respecting her afternoon’s performance, or of the estimation in which it was held.

As yet, they had only heard of her elopement in her fanciful dress. The rest was to be told by either herself or Zebedee. Agonized, lest the statement should first come to her aunt from the lips of the latter, as soon as the solemn “Amen” had been pronounced, Jeanie began : “I must tell you, Aunt Jane, I must tell you before Mr. Zebedee does.”

“Mind you tell, then,” said Zebedee, coming forward, very red, shaking the pigweed, “you small thing, that you flung this unhealthy root in my face, and called me a beetle.” The twist of his large mouth was awful.

The reproachful eyes and silent lips of Aunt Jane nearly burst the heart of the child ; but Zebedee's looks and actions only enraged her. She might have replied, but looking through the doorway, she saw Keturah making mouths at the old bachelor, which threw over the affair, for the moment, a shade of the burlesque, softening her anger.

"Is it true," said Jane Selden, removing the child from her, "that Jeanie has still further disgraced herself, by insulting one so much older, and in her anger lost all control of her temper?"

"You havn't heard, then," put in Zebedee, "that she has been jigging it in all the beer shops in the village, besides coming out with a feller I found along side of her. She was skairt that I saw her and meant to tell of her, and that's why she sent this unwholesome herb at me ; she called me an insect—a blind one ; she flew at me like a mad bee—she buzzed at me."

"I did not, Aunt Jane."

"Didn't I hear"—the speaker protruded his eye-balls and opened his mouth like an alligator—"that the little actress would perform agin next week?"

"And I will dance," replied Jeanie, in a rage, "if you do not let me alone, whatever I do!"

"And you will fling pokeweed in my face—will you, pid-wigeeon?"

"If you insult me," said Jeanie, putting down her little foot.

"Shall I tell them down to the beer shop that you are coming?" asked Zebedee.

"No!" cried the mad child, "but I know who will be there."

It was a favorite resort of Mr. Flint's.

"Jeanie," said Aunt Jane, "I have permitted you to talk, to see the spirit you evince in this matter. I am convinced

that you are unconscious of your fault, and impenitent for all the sorrow your disobedience and bad conduct have brought upon us all. Go to my room.

"Aunt Jane, I know that I have done wrong, but don't believe all he says."

"Hush, Jeanie! I will not permit you to talk so—go to your room!"

"Can't I help her undress, Miss Jane?" said Keturah, coming in, as Jeanie went up stairs.

"No!"

"Perhaps I had better go," said grandma.

"I prefer that she goes alone," said Aunt Jane. "Cousin, I observe that your eye is quite black. You had better bathe it with some arnica drops. Is it painful? the child must have been in a passion. I wish that you and she could agree better."

"It all happened as I was seeing her home. Why, Jane, she darted at me like a small pickerel! I'm afraid I am pizened for life. Hadn't I better go to bed right after supper? It always does me good. I don't know how I can face the village people after such disgrace, letting alone the pokeweed."

Jane sighed, and finished putting a black patch on Mr. Flint's eye, and went to Jeanie.

She found the child, still in her fanciful dress, sobbing. She uttered no word when her preceptress spoke to her, but cried more bitterly.

"Why do you grieve, Jeanie?" said Jane.

"I don't know. I wish I was dead."

"You are fit company for no one, in this wicked state. Must I feel that all my pains to make you a good girl have been unavailing, and that you are to grow up passionate and revengeful, with no regard to propriety in your conduct?"

"I only wanted to show my dress, and to dance for the girls."

"But you went away slyly, and disobediently; and then made yourself a public spectacle—and was this all, Jeanie?"

"No—but I hate Mr. Flint. I do, Aunt Jane—he told me not to make up lies."

"He does not understand your disposition; but this does not lessen your fault. An apology from you is due him, for your conduct; but you must be sincerely sorry first. Now, I wish to know the state of your mind about your offences. Are you truly penitent, or are these tears only those of passion?"

"I am sorry, and angry too."

"Sorry for what?"

"Sorry that I have made you all ashamed of me; but I did not know how bad it was until I met a gentleman at Mrs. Higgins's. I never want to see him again. It seemed to me all the world was in the room, when he made them let me go. Aunt Jane, you do not know how badly I feel. I ought not to stay with you any longer, yet I know not where to go. I am not fit to live with any body, though I suppose I should die in the streets, alone; but Mr. Zebedee would be glad."

The plaintive, humbled tone brought tears to the eyes of the tender hearted Jane. She allowed the little clinging arms to rest about her neck, and the throbbing heart of the penitent child to lie against her own. By gentle and clear reasoning she endeavored strongly to present to Jeanie's mind, the necessity of self-control, and such cultivation of high-toned principle as should form a basis for her character, under all temptations, fortifying her nature, as a house built upon a rock. With illustrations adapted to the child's comprehension, she elevated her mind, contrasting the beauty of the well-balanced character, like a well tuned instrument, breathing

harmony, with that ruled by the most generous, noble impulses, yet unstable as water, and made discordant by every opposing breath of human passion. She convinced the little girl that she was not too young to attempt the conflict—that in her own strength she could not prevail, but in His who would give her grace to conquer.

“Your desire, you say,” she continued, “was to exhibit your beautiful dress; but are you sure it was this? Ask your conscience, Jeanie, if the motive which influenced you to do wrong, was not more sinful? Was it not the vanity of showing your own person in it, and displaying an accomplishment which is in the power of the most uncultivated to attain; and in which you are excelled by many children brought up in ignorance and degradation?”

“Oh, I wish that gentleman had not seen me. Can I ever learn not to like to be beautifully dressed?”

“There is no harm, my dear child,” said her gentle preceptor, “in liking to be well dressed; if there was, the flowers would not have been made so gay; but if their exquisite petals covered poison and impurity, we should shun them. God has given us something to adorn, more precious than our persons—a soul to be decked with heavenly graces requiring more care and culture than the most beautiful perishable body. Do you not feel a stronger desire for this heavenly robe, fitting you for the presence of God, than the jewels and silks that could make you dazzling as a princess?”

“Oh, I shall never think, and be so good as this.”

“But you will promise to ask yourself one question in all your actions—all in which you doubt your friend’s approval—‘am I doing right?’ not ‘would it please me best?’ Will you try, and will you pray for God’s help?”

“I will,” said the child in a hushed voice.

“And now, Jeanie, what do you say about controlling

your temper? If Mr. Flint tries it so sorely, it is perhaps the discipline you need. Were you not wrong in being so angry with him to-day?"

"I am afraid I should do it again; he was so hateful."

"But that is no reason why you should be wicked. Is this the spirit of the meek and lowly Jesus?"

"But I am not meek. I could have killed him when he told me not to tell you lies."

"My love, with all your faults you were ever truthful—yes, truthful as your dear brother, and you were injured in this remark; but would it not have been better for you to have remained silent and respectful? I shall require you to apologize to Mr. Flint."

"I cannot tell him I am sorry. I would not have him know for the world that I regret it."

"You may not be able to improve Mr. Flint, but with pains, you can yourself; and remember that it is wrong to speak harshly to any one; and that 'a soft answer turneth away wrath.'"

On this point Jeanie was obdurate; but so softened and penitent regarding her fault, that she readily received forgiveness, and went to sleep comforted by the kiss of reconciliation.

Cheerful, yet pensive, the child came to her breakfast the following morning. After her usual greeting from the old people, she received the salutation of the bachelor.

"Good morning, Miss Hop-o'-my-thumb. Own up you have made a fool of yourself, and gave me a black eye."

"If I did, that was more than you could do; you were saved the trouble."

"Do you hear that?" turning to the old people. "Then the village are to have no more private theatricals?"

Jane entered the breakfast-room: she saw the cloud on

Jeanie's face, which she had left so bright, and looked inquiringly.

"Oh, aunt, I don't like to be made fun of." She could utter no more, but burst into tears."

"What would Arthur have you say, this morning?"

"That I did wrong; and I did. Now you know Mr. Zebedee Flint, my opinion of my 'private theatricals'; and I hope that this is the last that I shall hear of them from you."

"Jeanie, have you nothing further?"

"Yes; that I hope he will treat me like a gentleman, and I will never trouble him more with pigweed."

This was the best apology that could be elicited from Jeanie.

CHAPTER XI.

DURING Jeanie's stay at the farm, she had seen little of her mother; her visits having been postponed from time to time, by the latter, who, after her husband's departure, was if possible more gay. In these brief visits, Mrs. Miller saw the increasing loveliness of her daughter, and with the winning powers she possessed, attached to her her artless loving child. She bewailed in her presence her country education, leaving for the time on the mind of Jeanie, a desire to be for ever with her, where she could feast on so much love, light and beauty.

But the pleasure was ever a brief one, and after multitudinous kisses, the reception of choice dresses, which she was never permitted to wear, the acquisition of the last waltz and fashionable dance, the little girl was sent back to one, she pronounced "a good sort of governess," which approbation was evinced to the latter, by the presentation of some trifling gift. Jeanie never met her grandmother. She spirited about somewhere in the region of her child, though was not often visible, as she had fallen into her old habits of haunting the dwellings of her relatives. She had buried sister Sally, and was much occupied in the examination of her relics. She went about, gleaning wherever the harvest promised best, changing little excepting in her increased vigilance in the care of her treasures. Not a day passed that she did not write to some one, bewailing her destitute condition; and so plausible was her tale, that

her appeals were not always in vain. Of those near by, she petitioned only for food and lodging.

Jeanie ever parted from her mother in tears and with fond regret—grief lightened by the prospect of pleasures in store for her.

She could not be away when grandpa gathered his nuts and apples in the fall ; and when winter came, she anticipated many a sleigh-ride over the snow-clad hills. Even Keturah with her brawny hands, could not crack butternuts at evening faster, or better, than the merry little warbler, who sang like a cricket—chirping on the hearth. But better than all, Jeanie enjoyed a sly joke upon Zebedee, whose attachment to Jane grew more evident, although no one could see that it was reciprocated.

It might have been that Jeanie made sometimes an odious third in the party to the singing meeting, and in her mischievous frolics, that she mimicked the bachelor ; and though reproved, would not always desist from a waltz in his presence, even coaxing him, as her spirits rose higher, to join her. It might be, that these were her sins ; but true it was, even as she grew out of her “smallness,” she grew no more in favor with Mr. Zebedee Flint.

The latter became deeper in love, an attachment evinced by sharper and more frequent use of his elbow ; by sly nods, and grunts, all unfortunately as well understood by Jeanie and Keturah, as by her for whom they were intended—many of them as especial invitations to go down to the brook while he fished.

If Jane Selden had a weakness, it was in her total self-abnegation, where the wishes and feelings of all others were concerned. She knew, that as grandma said, Zebedee was “lost” without her, and therefore often accompanied him on his piscatory excursions. In matters of love, she was not keen-sighted, and though never repulsing the

bachelor's attentions, Jane could not be called coquettish. It was a remarkable courtship, this of Zebedee and Jane ; and a matter of great doubt whether it would ever reach a crisis.

One day she seemed unusually obtuse regarding her admirer's movements or signs, which Jeanie observed ; inspiring her by the promptings of Keturah, to a piece of folly, perhaps reprehensible, and which might have resulted seriously to Mr. Flint, or to his clothes.

Before the maiden had received the guttural signal, (signifying fish and Jane) Jeanie put on the sun-bonnet and shawl of the latter ; and with knitting-bag in hand, passed the bachelor, going toward the brook. She imitated her aunt's slow pace, and after arriving at the log (the accustomed seat) sat down—commencing to knit.

Zebedee felt that Jane was going by, and cast his eager eyes that way. He could not mistake that shawl and bonnet. He would know them in the meeting-house—on a church steeple, and how could he mistake them on Jane ? There was nothing that looked more like the little spinster, than her starched white sun-bonnet.

Nobody knew how much he loved Jane ; so he thought, and he had never been encouraged as now. She must have known that he was going to fish. He could hardly dig his worms.

He was glad that he was not obliged to go into the house to look her up, exposing his anxiety to Keturah and Jeanie ; so with pole and line he started for the stream, thinking how much easier it was to bait fish than women. He took a new path, that he might come plumb alongside of her, surprising her. So he walked on the grass, still and sly—with his pole and worm-pail, and after some panting sat down by—the bonnet and shawl ! How Jane knit ! She was foolish to be so diffident at her age ! He had

never told her how he loved her—he never could, but now there was no one by.

With a shaking of his angular joints, perspiration starting at every pore, a rattling of his guttural tones, he clasped the waist of the little figure beside him, and gasped : “Jane ! Jane ! what’s the use of living this way ?”

The wild little Jeanie did not scream or faint, but with one energetic struggle, a child’s strong push (she was now twelve), sent down the bank the terrified Zebedee.

Sprawling he lay in the knee-deep flood. His balloon coat tails, and blue slim legs were on the ascendant, but not without vigorous dashing efforts was he wholly up. Opening his tearful eyes, he resolved to see what had happened to him. Returning consciousness showed him that on the grass lay the inimitable shawl and bonnet—and in the distance flying through the woods, was the “disgraceful child Jeanie.”

He was wet—decidedly so—he might catch cold ! Jeanie had run into the house, to prepare Keturah for the plaster which she knew would be needed.

It was of no use talking to her. She upset the waffle-batter in her convulsions of laughter, and awoke grandpa from his afternoon nap, besides scaring Mink off from the door-mat. And what ailed Keturah all tea-time, nobody could tell—who kept her hand over her mouth, running out with snorts and choking. Grandma thought she must have the tooth-ache, but Jeanie knew better.

Poor, frightened Jeanie ! She had anticipated no such denouement, but was rightly served. She had expected a poke in her side, nothing more, and kept discreetly quiet ; but the squeeze, that made her feel like a kitten in a grist-mill, demanded summary resistance.

The shawl and bonnet were that night found in their

proper places ; but when Zebedee went up to bed, knitting needles were seen protruding from his pocket.

Jeanie had no toast for tea until the advertisements were all read by Mr. Flint, in the village paper ; and might, through the negligence of the latter, have missed the luxury, altogether, but for Aunt Jane, who began to compassionate her situation. Strange as it might seem, Mr. Flint did not report the culpable proceeding ; neither did he complain of wet or cold.

But the trouble was not all over. On going to her room, Jane found upon the floor, her knitting work, with the needles out, the stitches down, and the yarn in tangled confusion ! When had such a circumstance before transpired ? No one in the household plead guilty. The mischief was laid to the cat.

When, oh ! Grimalkin, will thy hour of justice come ? When wilt thou, in wrathful indignation, with back elevated, eyes radiating green and ghastly fire, demand vengeance for the wrongs daily perpetrated upon thy feline race ? When was ever the cupboard found bare of a mackerel bone, or the bird-cage robbed of the pet canary—or from the well-filled milk-pans, a lap the less of its creamy sweets—a ball of thread or skein of worsted, in a snarl—a sly hole made in a spinster's bed ; but thou, or one of thy suspected race, wert the doomed offender ? When perhaps at the very time of the committal of each imputed crime, thou wert tending a rising family in thy mistress's hat crown !

Without trial by judge or jury--without the benefit of sympathy or council, if not lynched or sacked, thy character has been assailed, until defamation was ruin ; while perhaps in indignation, thy fur was rising, thy claws stretching, with the vile calumny !

Yes, Jane—spotless example of thy sex, even thou could thus traduce a helpless innocent cat !

CHAPTER XII.

DURING Jeanie's sojourn with her country friends, she had but once met her father, he having returned to see his children, when he again went abroad, where he was occupied with manufacturing interests. During the interim, Mrs. Miller lived in New Orleans. The rumor of their separation was now confirmed. The deserted wife needed all her pride to screen her sense of mortification, knowing that two-sided as is the world, there were few who would honestly condemn her simple-hearted, honorable husband, though she believed, and not without truth, that she would not lack private vindicators among the opposite sex.

In defiance, she generously exhibited her hospitality, and drew at her salons the brilliant and distinguished. But, like Lady Blessington, she mostly discarded the society of women, preferring those who could "admire without envy, and praise without censure." How well they fulfilled her expectations ! how noble, charitable, and forgiving they were !

What angels the men !

They came offering incense, scattering flowers in her path. Her cornucopia is rich with fruits—she is too generous to tell of their cost, and the donor is gay and beautiful.

Mrs. Miller had also advisers ; one most influential, was Mr. Launcelot Lawrence, who considered her "a victim of malice and barbarity"—whose "wrongs ought to be redressed by a bill of divorce."

This proclamation Mr. Lawrence made publicly and pri-

vately. Mr. Launcelot was a valiant man, and liked valor to a valiant degree, venturing to speak lightly of the continued existence of any individual who professed not zeal in Mrs. Miller's cause—he being glad himself to invest the bulk of his fortune in prosecuting her suit, which bulk being nowhere visible, excepting in the plantation of brush about his mouth, was likely to prove unavailable.

Mrs. Miller did not encourage this conversation in Mr. Lawrence, she having some sense as well as vanity.

Mr. Launcelot Lawrence was a man who made himself, as he affirmed, "indispensable to the sex," was ever "at their service"—was Quixotic, a man of honor, which he was willing to evince at all hazards (not being opposed), by espousing the cause of the "basely perjured" Mrs. Miller. He only wished he could meet the "absconding villain," that he might "fill his place with a man of reputation." To this chivalrous proclamation, Mrs. Miller smiled radiantly, swallowing her disgust. It was such admirers that mortified the proud woman. Yet there was no one who could exactly occupy the post of this man in her service. Mr. Lawrence was a gossip, and showed diligence in acquiring information. Through him she learned the movements of her husband; and that Hugh Shelbourne was dead; also, that Mr. Miller had returned home with increased wealth, and received honors in the gift of the government, such as she would have enjoyed as his companion, and which he possibly would not have declined, had she been able to fill the post as "his lady" abroad.

This information Mr. Lawrence communicated as he would give a child sugar-plums; and so well pleased was he with the magnitude of his budget, as to be indifferent to its quality. On quantity he prided himself, and delivered the commodity, as would he read on-dits, collectively.

Thus he bought the privilege of a seat in her pleasure-boat,

resting on his oars. And a gorgeous barge it was ; a fitting craft for its fair queen, and filled from stem to stern, though all were not "Cupid boys" who fanned her. She had her favorites, yet to none yielded her heart. This was a "sentimental weakness," of which she was not guilty, though she forgave it in her courtiers, provided they paid her—what her pride, if not her principles, demanded—respect.

Elinor Miller had celebrity ; she had bought it, such as it was, at a price all too dear, and now she meant to queen it. But her subjects ; she despised them, and in her heart (for she had one, if crusted over), called them unprofitable.

There was one who personated her ideal, but he kept coldly distant. He piqued, annoyed, and at times angered her, provoking the question, why he visited her rooms, if not to enjoy her society ? To him she seemed a cypher ; indeed he was indifferent to all women (for there were some in her train), and sought the men. He was to her glorious to look upon, with his eye of fire, and form of power. Mind was written on his face, and though from his lips came cold and passionless words, yet she believed they might be the channel of eloquence. He seemed more stern than sad, but there were times when she caught a look that seemed to tell of conquered wretchedness, evident in his tones, which grew rigid, as she looked her sympathy.

But that this man was impenetrable, and in his whole mien different from the boy she once had flirted with, shuffled aside for a trump, winning her the stakes for which she played, he might occasionally have reminded her of one now dead. Why did she care to know him ? Why did he both fascinate and annoy her ?—this Philip Hamlin ? But for his distinguished bearing, she would have excluded him for his indifference. Yet he was introduced by a friend she valued.

Mr. Hamlin was fond of chess. He played, she said, eternally. He irritated her by his devotion to his game.

Her presence, which magnetized all others, which had ruined the success of many an older player, had upon this guest no effect. He ever won ; and if he smiled when she applauded, it was archly upon his opponent.

But once had she seemed to awaken interest in aught she did or said. After a fruitless effort at conversation with him, she endeavored to call his attention to her collection of paintings. On the art she talked with an appreciation and knowledge of her subject.

Mr. Hamlin consented to make the survey, and he was faithful to the object, apparently heedless of his guide. Mrs. Miller was persevering. She asked him if he would like to see a portrait of her child. He assented eagerly.

“ It is lovely.” He viewed it narrowly near by, and at a distance. “ But for the ringlets and the rose-tinted clouds, I should believe it the picture of a little girl, I left crying on a log in the country, dressed like an infant actress. Her hair was short, but she was more beautiful.”

Mrs. Miller was not pleased with the comparison. The pictures were all examined, when Mr. Hamlin bowed, and parted with his hostess. He never stayed to supper, or accepted wine. Rumor said he was a man of fortune, that he had relations in the city, and a younger brother, the child of his mother’s second marriage. But so uncommunicative was Mr. Hamlin, it was strange that so much had been discovered of his history.

Mrs. Miller inquired of Mr. Lawrence about him, who said he was “ a poor emigrant and a sawney.”

CHAPTER XIII.

LITTLE JEANIE is clapping her hands with artless joy—laying down the precious letter, that brings to her, tidings of her father's return.

Her last visit had been made to her mother, in New York, not presented as an object of pride to the friends of her fashionable parent, for simply, unconsciously, the child had betrayed her country breeding.

Shorn of her radiant curls, not one of which was left to grace her lily throat, the little girl with her cropped hair, was received ; while with disgust her mother took from her person the homely apparel which had been substituted for her exquisite attire.

With eager solicitude, the ambitious woman had listened to the tones of her voice, fancying in each syllable, musically dropped, that she heard the “odious, nasal twang,” which she accredited to her protectors, and in each turn of her flexible, graceful figure, that she shadowed forth the “prim old maid.”

Alone with Jeanie, she delighted her as formerly, with her mirthful, affectionate playfulness, and in such brief moments she exhibited her undisguised love for her child. Yet pride forbade her from showing so rustic a resemblance to herself, retaining her long enough to fascinate the little being, who yearned for closer and more intimate communion with one whom she had ever idolized.

Without examination of Jeanie's acquirements, or the

faintest scrutiny of her inner life—without a glance at the development of a mind, just bursting its germ, as a bud reveals its sweetness, modestly, timidly—without one emotion of gratitude towards her who had kept it pure and uncontaminated, she condemned her education. She looked upon the little wild flower deploringly, deprecatingly, perceiving not that the gentle courtesy of manner, which sometimes startled her with its natural sweetness, had its origin in an unselfish regard for the feelings of others—consideration which had been sedulously taught her, neither realizing that the cultivation of her moral nature had imparted to her bearing, the refining influence which the world's varnish, without it, can never supply.

Jane Selden, with her humble, pretensionless manners, could have taught etiquette to the worldly woman of fashion, though policy formed not the basis of her code.

It was a joyful scream, and a light, elastic bound—that of Jeanie's, as she threw her arms around her aunt's neck, trembling with delight, while she pointed out the window, exclaiming, "He is coming! Dear papa is coming!"

Jane disengaged herself composedly, putting aside the exercises which she had been correcting for her pupil—her eyes glancing from the glad child towards the gate, and from the form there revealed, to rest on a small mirror which reflected her slightly ruffled plaits of brown. Smoothing them with her delicate fingers, she said, a little flurried :

"Yes, you are right, my dear."

"Oh! let me go down! I have learned all my lessons."

"But not in such a flutter, Jeanie. Be composed, first."

"But I am so impatient." The little girl held both her hands over her face, covering her eyes, through which tears were starting.

"No matter, my love, what the occasion may be, never be hasty, or untidy. This delay would not have been required

if you had been more neatly dressed. Go and make yourself fit to meet your papa."

Jane Selden then commenced her own toilet arrangements, still looking out of the window, seeing nothing but Zebedee going down to the brook, who stopped first at the water-spout to drink (a habit he had when agitated), indicating that he was sheering off to avoid the new comer.

"I wish he would be more civil," thought Jane, as her excellent brother-in-law stepped on to the porch, arousing both the lion-headed rapper, and Mink, its echo.

The greeting below stairs had evidently taken place, by the noise that grandpa made (a way of his), hemming and hawing, when excited or pleased, and the private directions grandma was giving Keturah, down the stair-way (being deaf), in a loud voice, about the killing of chickens (a sacrifice paid to distinguished guests at the farm), and lastly, by the calls for Jane, in the hall, by the old man, who was growing impatient.

With her white apron nicely fixed, and the short hair brushed apart, as if by the counting of each silken fibre; then off the blue-veined temples, in waves, wet and glossy, leaving in unshadowed purity the child brow, Jeanie, in breathless joy, was at last permitted to bound over the stair-way, and like a fluttering bird, to its home.

Amidst the demonstrative joy of the old people—the rattling of Zebedee on the porch, with his fish-pole and worm-pail, and the bawling of Keturah (who was watching the dying flutter of a headless victim) to Bill Stone to catch another hen, the glad child nestled in her father's outstretched arms.

With glistening eyes, Mr. Miller observed her improved appearance.

Jane was slow in coming. She had to replait her somewhat thin hair, to put on her black silk apron, and snowy

collar and wristbands, as if she could make herself more like a pea-blossom, in purity; but a damp wind had been-blowing, and might have somewhat unstarched her white petals.

Affectionate was the meeting on the part of the kind brother-in-law, to Sister Jane, who looked so little, nice, and unassuming beside her dignified relative, actually blushing when he kissed her. It was a ceremony always enacted since Lucy's day, on his part, but Jane was never prepared for it. It may be that every one expected, at one time, that Mr. Miller would marry Jane, and that she, even, had surmised it.

Zebedee had come in, as far as the door, at the time of the meeting, but suddenly made as rapid strides for the porch. Jeanie went out at the moment, and found his body at a right angle, and his mouth beside a couple of bull-heads.

Zebedee hated strangers at any time; and was never known to be civil to one. Indeed he would not have cared if there had been no other in the world, but himself and Jane. But there was, and he knew that some politeness was expected from him on this occasion. When he felt there was a safe opening, he made another attempt to overcome his awkwardness. Putting his earlocks over his bald crown, giving a hitch to his blues, with his hands in his pockets, he finally showed himself at the door, with his hat on. This last article of apparel, he felt as a screen to his face, and it might be to his character—for he gave it a stronger pull over his beetle-brows, when he wished to be secure from observation; and to hide his attachment to Jane, whom he always slighted on public occasions.

After giving a nod and a grunt to Mr. Miller, who came forward to shake hands with him, he showed himself, it would seem, for no other purpose than that of flourishing in

Jane's face his snuffy coat tails—when the latter moved quietly, wiping with her spotless cambric, the corner of her eye. Jane was used to Zebedee.

Jeanie sat in her father's lap, answering his many questions until tea-time.

That the coming meal was in a state of lively progression, Keturah testified, by her bustling in and out, her rattling of the dishes, and frequent nudges to Jane to come into the kitchen ; which free-masonry signs all comported with her easy manners. How Mr. Zebedee Flint wished somebody would call him.

The rooster that had lustily crowed that morning, in view of the rising young colony, who to him would bow obeisance, was now on the gridiron ; and by his side, two of his luscious favorites, who had met their inevitable fate at the hands of Keturah, while meditating an exultant cackle over an achievement of an egg. The fowls done brown, hot and cold bread, sausages and smoked beef, apple sauce, dried peaches, waffles and cheese, not forgetting ham and eggs, being orderly arranged, dinner and supper were ready.

Mr. Miller frolicked with Jeanie on one end of the family sofa, Jane sat under the wing of the other reading the evening paper to grandpa, while grandma tapped her snuff-box, and partook of its contents with unusual satisfaction. Zebedee was still growing to his chair, and wishing himself out of his ceremonious agony, and down to the brook. The call was made for supper. Their visitor was acquainted with the liberality, as well as the precision, of the domestic arrangements of the farm ; and had eaten too many good meals with the old folks, to marvel at any of their early tea preparations. The usual silence of the repast was broken in upon by the new arrival—the ever welcome guest

who now partook of its bounty, having a magnetic power over all hearts in the home where he had wedded in his youth, a daughter and sister so beloved ; and to which he had brought in whole soul confidence, the child of his second unhappy marriage.

He discussed the crops, church, and politics with grandpa ; and to the old lady talked over the neighbors and the dear boy Arthur ; addressing Jane in a tone gentle and kind, as her sweet serenity seemed to crave. Little Jeanie, the lark, was where she would ever be, tucked under the wing of the parent bird. Respect and veneration mingled powerfully in Jane Selden's regard for her brother-in-law, and so timid and reserved was her manner in the exhibition of her warmest friendships, that had she, as was once thought possible, been his choice, it is doubtful whether, loving him, that she would have ever given the widower sufficient encouragement to have addressed her. Though kind and affable, a shadow was not more unapproachable than the maiden Jane. And yet Zebedee pursued her with fidelity, and with a dog-in-the-manger jealousy, not offering himself, nor meaning that another should ; and he believed if there was anybody that would keep, it was Jane. And while fascinated with Elinor Castleman, it was not strange that Mr. Miller never knew how pure and holy a flame, he had by his devoted kindness, enkindled in the breast of the humble shrinking girl. He supposed, like every one else, that she was somehow identified with the odd bachelor, who had never loved any mortal but herself. Mr. Miller however found it hard to credit the report, having nothing upon which to found it, excepting the entire coolness with which she received his attentions, and her kind manner, exhibited alike in her willingness to confer upon him the favor of her

society, the use of her needle in his service, or the untiring exercise of her patience in listening to his endless bodily complaints.

It was a rumor that had ever excited the derision of Keturah, who considered "Miss Jane no match for Mr. Flint"—she being in her estimation, "no more to spark than a streak of moonshine."

After tea, Jeanie was summoned to her father's room. It was worth the prettiest, to see the child's face as her treasures were displayed. Like the smell of sweet clover, came over her the fresh odor of the enamelled page. With intense delight she viewed each exquisite picture, and the clear brilliant type, that is alike beautiful to the young and old.

"Now for Annt Jane's present." Jane fluttered a little, but went on with her knitting, but was forced to look up, when by the little girl, on her lap, was laid the costly gift, and to murmur her indistinct thanks.

"And what for the rest?" cried Jeanie, delighted with the pleasure imparted to others.

The presents for the old couple were produced, and lastly, a dressing-case for Arthur.

"Now mamma's!"

"Let me see your books."

"When I see her present," the child replied, playfully.

"Mamma is where she can buy everything beautiful," said Mr. Miller, hurriedly.

"But they will not be from *you*." Jeanie spoke earnestly.

The father stood alone in the porch. Jeanie bounded towards him, and slid her hand into his. The queries and remarks of the child had pained him, though his conduct towards her mother had been based on firm integrity, and was the result of rigid mental discipline, from which exercise of his mind he had excluded feeling. He anticipated in the

future greater embarrassment in Jeanie's questions, and determined, young as she was, that she should know the situation of her parents.

One of his marked characteristics was a keen sense of justice. On her scale he weighed his conclusions, from which he could not be turned by his tenderest emotions. Honest himself, he believed others so, until proved guilty; but his confidence once shaken in man or woman, it was rarely restored.

It was like the plucking out of an eye when he separated from one whom he had loved so fondly; declaring to the world that he deemed her not fit for the guardianship of the tender years of his child, and no longer a wife whom he honored and loved.

Too late, the fair pleader came to his feet. He had resolved, and deemed the separation just. Self-respect, and his child's future character and welfare requiring the decisive step.

And now, when his little girl uttered with her sweet voice an unconscious, loving petition for her mother, he was still firm, saying nothing by look or word that should deceive her, and after she heard the sad revelation, lead her to think of it, marvelling.

"May I walk with you?" said Jeanie, as her father turned unconsciously towards a bridge that lay over the stream near by.

"How you have grown," was the reply, taking Jeanie's hand.

"Yes, I am almost as tall as mamma."

"Do you love the country, and are you quite happy here?"

"Oh, yes, I was until you came, but now I want to go back and live with you and her. I cannot sleep for thinking of it lately. I have tried to be patient, but sometimes I am not."

"You have a kind mother in your Aunt Jane, Jeanie."

"Yes ; but I cannot forget how dear mamma used to look at me with her beautiful eyes, and hold me so close to her, while she told me that some day I should be always with her."

"Supposing she were to die, and you could never hope to see her ?"

"I do not like to think of this ; promise me that you will take me to her now. She must be so lonely without us."

"Can you not bear disappointment ?"

"I have borne a great many, and I can more, I suppose."

"Then you believe that it is best for us that we should have trials ?"

"So Aunt Jane says."

"Is it hard for you to exercise self-denial, Jeanie ?"

"Am I not self-denying when I do not rebel at your wishes, staying so long away from you all ? I don't think that I was born as good as some. I cannot give up what I like and love so easily."

"Supposing the world, Jeanie, was left without laws for its government, do you not think that wickedness would overrun the land, and no innocent person be safe ? We must therefore, to contend with life's temptations and disappointments, put restraints or laws likewise upon our hearts. You have commenced this discipline, by endeavoring to bear disappointment, and now I wish to prepare your mind for trial such as you have never known."

Mr. Miller and Jeanie had reached a wild path by the running stream, over which was a rude bridge of logs ; a pleasant evening resort, being overshadowed by willows and made fragrant by the perfume of the sweet-brier and alder. A protruding part of the bridge furnished them a seat, in view of the rivulet. Drawing the little Jeanie to his knee,

the father watched the effect of his announcement upon her.

The sun's last beams fell across her short, waving hair, making more dazzling the purity of her innocent face, as she looked up pitifully.

For some moments neither spoke. "Papa, what is it I must give up?"

"Give up!" said Mr. Miller, in half soliloquy. "This is indeed a trial for those in older years. To give up those we love, to live without all the heart craves—but, my child, I am too earnest for you; you cannot struggle too much in this heart-warfare. You must learn how to give up. It pains me to sadden you, my little girl, but there is one afflicting truth that you must soon know, and that you may not be deceived, I must impart it."

Jeanie drew nearer to her father, her eyes expanding till the dark pupils covered them, leaving but a rim of blue. The red of her lips was fainter, and her cheek more transparent. Burying her head on his breast, she said:

"I will try to bear it."

Smoothing, still smoothing the polished brow, his fingers in and out of the soft hair, his arm clasping the little one he was about to pain, the father, in low tones, spoke to his darling.

"You yearn for your childhood's home. You sigh for a fond mother's care and protection. Had you no father, my little girl, no mother, perhaps you would be as well off, for God is the God of the orphan, as He will be your Comforter, if you seek Him. For, Jeanie, your parents are for ever separated on earth. I shall not, as you suppose, seek your mother; there is no love, as you think, between us; we have parted, no more to live together."

It was sad to the affectionate parent, to see the little white brow grow paler, the perspiration to bead it, as water-

drops on a lily ; to feel the little hands he held grow cold, and faintness to steal over the drooping body that he held in his arms.

Alarmed, Mr. Miller carried the child down to the stream, and laved her face.

"Oh God !" he murmured, "take her as she now is, before a shadow of the world's taint has stained her soul ; in the blood of Christ wash her clean from original sin, or prepare her for the trials and temptations before her."

Jeanie unclosed her eyes, but with a sigh.

"Did you say that I must not love my mother ? that we must live always apart, and have no home together ?"

"Perhaps, my dear child, I cannot have a better time to tell you than now, what you must know." Mr. Miller faltered ; he was never fluent in speech, and when agitated, often failed in utterance. The dimmed eyes were opened upon his. Jeanie promised to be calm. "Your mother and father lived unhappily together. Deception was the cause of our misery. This is all that I can tell you now. To the rest I would have you ever close your ears."

"I don't want to hear any more, no, no." The child now wept frantically, sobbing at intervals, "Why don't you love mamma ? Why don't you love dear, beautiful mamma ?"

"Hush ! hush ! my child."

"Did not she do right ?"

"God is the best judge of our actions. You must decide when you grow older with whom you will choose to live. If you prefer your mother's home in three years, I will give you to her. It will be but a short separation."

"You hold my waist too tight, papa."

Relaxing his clasp, Mr. Miller continued, "Your own character must be your study. I trust that in you I shall never be disappointed. You will be fourteen next winter, when I intend that you shall go to New Orleans. There

you will see much gaiety, and will be in a sphere to judge whether it will solely constitute your happiness—whether you will choose to live with me or with your mother."

"With both—with both," came in smothered accents.

"I do not wish you to determine now, my child, but it is right that you should know that on your decision rests your future fate, and that my fondest desire is, that your choice will be made with purity of heart and conscience."

"May I not, if I can, make you love mamma?"

"My child! my child! She never cared for your father, more than I do for the mill that grinds me corn." Mr. Miller seemed to have momentarily forgotten that he was speaking to one who had yet to learn that gold could corrupt the heart. "No, let not feeling or affection guide your choice. Go to the one to whom you can do most good."

"Papa! papa!" Jeanie's voice was choked. "Don't say so; don't talk so—so harsh, so cruel of poor mamma."

"Was I harsh, my darling? God forbid that I should grieve you more; but it was better that I told you than another."

"When will you go? and when will Arthur come?"

"He will be with you at the close of his college life. I shall remain in New York, and will come to see you. You were very happy on your last visit to your mother?"

"Oh, yes, when she held me on her lap, and we were alone together; but she said that Aunt Jane had spoiled my beauty—that she had destroyed all my resemblance to her. Do I look like her?"

"You will never be as handsome."

"Now, I remember she said that if I stayed here much longer that I would lose all the air of the Castlemans. Were they grander than the Millers?"

"Your father's family was an humble one, Jeanie; what

wealth and respectability I have, has been earned by hard labor."

"What did you work so hard for?"

"For naught, it seems."

"And do you give mamma so much that is beautiful? She has so many friends. I could not see her much alone. Do you give her so much money when you don't love her papa?"

"You are too young to be informed more on this subject. Then you like beautiful things? I am glad of it, God loves beauty, and has put us in a world of beauty. Is not this a beautiful parlor, with its willow green curtains, its glittering mirror, and its night lamps in the sky?"

"The stars make me think of Arthur. He used to talk to me of them. You don't like to be very gay like mamma?"

"Rise early, to-morrow morning, and I will show you what gaiety I love. The world will be full of it—sunshine, bird music, bright flowers, and a gayer band of revellers than any lighted hall ever assembled."

It had now become dark, the stars only illuminating the country landscape. Mr. Miller, rose, taking his little girl's hand. "No, Jeanie, your father is not a misanthrope, and loves nothing better than your merry laugh. But I would have you happy rather than gay, and bear ever in mind, in all the allurements of your coming life, that there is another world, where 'eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, all that God hath prepared for them that love Him.'"

So faithfully had Jeanie been taught the beauty and excellence of a religious life, that her mind was not bewildered by her father's precepts. Yet so terrible, so sad, was the communication he had made, she could not be comforted; and her aunt saw on her return, she had been weeping, and was still in tears. When she kissed her, and bade her good

night, it was with more than her usual tenderness ; and when in childish forgiveness, Jeanie fell asleep, she came again to her bed-side, to which she called her father, to note the touching sweetness of her face and attitude. Her cheeks were flushed, and her long lashes still wet, as if in abandonment to sorrow, she had shut her eyes upon a world, for the first time, dark in prospect.

She did not fear continued depression for her young charge ; and believed that by morning, the little brow would be free from its evening shadow, and full of day sunshine ; but for her affectionate sorrowing father, she more deeply mourned. She was ignorant of the cause of Jeanie's grief ; and not until the hour for parting at night, was she made aware of it.

“Stop a moment, Jane, I would speak to you.”

“Here's your candle, Mr. Flint,” said Keturah, to Zebedee, hearing at the close of the deacon's prayer, the request of Mr. Miller. “Miss Jane has got other circumstances to attend to, besides you ; I'll see to your rheumatiz.”

With a fierce look at people in general, and desperate contortions of his body and mouth, the bachelor eel'd out of the room, bidding Jane good night in a manner which spoke annihilation to all sympathy for her on his part, and devouring propensities towards any thing human between them—after which he went to bed (so testified by Keturah) who came ten minutes after with a broad grin on her face, from the door of his room, after sending in through the crack a hot brick, rolled in flannel, for his back.

Jane and Mr. Miller were left in the possession of the comfortable sofa, the former tucked away under one of its spacious arms, while her brother-in-law occupied the other. With some embarrassment, Mr. Miller imparted his communication—telling her that it was his wish that she should

still retain his child ; and continue her course of instruction. "I perceive," he remarked, "in my conversation with her, that she has been kept in ignorance of the situation of her parents—this has been right ; but it is henceforth my desire, that she is not encouraged with hope of a reunion between us. Revelations which have been made to me, since I have been abroad, forbid it ; and I wish her to understand that she can never be united to us both."

" You did then at one time," said Jane, " anticipate a different state of things ?" her cheek coloring from timidity ; and fear of intrusion into domestic difficulties.

" I know not what might have been the result of a change in Mrs. Miller's life. But, Jane, this is more than I have said of her for years—but I cannot deny my confidence to the sister of our angel Lucy—you have reminded me more of her on this visit than ever." Mr. Miller thought of Jane as a step-mother.

" We were once said to be alike," replied the latter, crossing her little feet, and looking at them. " If she had only been permitted to live"—

Mr. Miller drew nearer his companion.

" Or I had sooner appreciated her younger sister—Jane, I deserve all that I have suffered, for turning from one like you, to a being so false in principle. I do not know that I could have ever won this little hand," Mr. Miller took in his own the shrinking fingers beside him ; " but I will ask, if I can obtain a—divorce," was rather breathed than spoken.

" No, no," interposed Jane, pale with fright and agitation. " You are still a husband—and it is wrong to so speak—and if it were not, you could not love two so different—you will offend me by saying more."

" I will confess the truth to you. I was intoxicated with the beauty and charms of Elinor ; and loved her, yes wickedly, for it was with a passion, no mortal should dare

to feel. But when I discovered, that I had been deluded by her seeming love for me, - I parted from her ; yet so beguiling was she in that painful hour, that I cherished then a glimmering hope that we might meet again. But her subsequent course has made our separation final. Jane, should I be released—for Jeanie's sake?"

The long crushed love of the maiden thrilled her frame ; but her firm, religious feelings arose in the conflict, and she felt, with grief, that her esteemed friend and brother had been tempted aside, from the correct line of duty ; and, in his regard for her, uttered language that he would ultimately regret.

Her reply, interrupting the speaker, was consistent. She firmly repulsed the advances of her married suitor, who felt, in her words, a keen sense of reproach ; and that he had done injustice to the integrity and purity of one for whom he felt an honest attachment, while he had lessened his own self-respect.

During these few words, interrupting the conversation, which related chiefly to Jeanie, both had betrayed emotions which had never been revealed ; and although the coy Jane, for the first time, refused the fraternal kiss, Mr. Miller learned, in that trembling denial, that he was beloved.

A desire for a domestic wife, and a mother for his child, had led Mr. Miller to declare his preference, in a moment, when he had believed it easy to annul his marriage.

The gentle, yet severe, reproof he received, showed him he had deviated from the path of honesty, while he, more than ever, painfully realized that he was still the husband of a being, known less as his wife than as the Aspasia of a world's worship.

With warmth and sudden penitence, he craved the pardon of her, whose love, compared to his own, was as fire to ashes.

Mortification, rather than disappointment, pervaded the feelings of Mr. Miller, in Jane Selden's repulse.

She was right when she told him that one who had ever loved Elinor Castleman, could not meet the exaction of her heart. The conversation had been prolonged beyond the usual hour of retiring, which had given Zebedee a period of afflictive restlessness. His ears had become distended, and his eyes expanded to a fearful size, while with his mouth open, and his legs exposed to the night air, he sat on his low bedstead, the door ajar, listening for Jane's footsteps over the staircase.

She had never sat up with him after ten. It was now eleven. He became desperate, and in his excitement, drew around him a bed-blanket, and with his cotton night-cap drawn closer, proceeded to the door of the parlor, where he listened.

"Forget this conversation!" there was confidence and mystery implied.

The door creaked. Mr. Miller and Jane stood opposite, her hand in his, the pair bidding good night. A long nose came through the door-way.

"What is there?" said Mr. Miller.

"It must be the cat." The nose sneezed. Jane knew that she was mistaken.

Alarmed with an exposure so unexpected, Mr. Flint suddenly retreated, and as he did so, instead of his own door, opened one leading to a small enclosure at the head of the cellar stairs. He had had a scolding from Keturah, at sunset, for his laziness in leaving a barrel of molasses there standing. In his haste and precipitancy he now upset it, breaking the head in its fall, and in his eagerness to escape unseen to his room, fell lucklessly into the upturned flood of sweets.

Though like a fly in a mug of honey, he wished himself

extricated ; still, his bones were uninjured, so soft and rich was the immersion.

From the confinement of the place, there was no escape for his bath, and scarcely for himself, so pressingly was he detained. Unfortunately, his clothing was light, and his plunge extensive, his person being generously overwhelmed, barring the top of his head.

If there was anything which Zebedee hated, it was molasses and small children—both being, in his estimation, sticky and unwholesome. His situation was unpleasant. He might have cried out in his dilemma, but he could not, for molasses, of which his mouth was full ; he would have been independent, and gone slyly to bed, for there was nothing noisy about the accident, or his fall ; but he would leave discernible tracks behind him ; besides, he was in no condition for retirement. It was useless to be excited, and to groan, scold, or halloo, was not feasible. He thought, with compunction, of all the small races he had pitilessly seen immersed like himself, and honestly wished, if he must be drowned, that it might be in something more limpid.

Zealous were his efforts—energetic his exertions, as he flounced and splashed in the West Indian product, regardless of wasteful expenditure, only praying (unutterably) for a release from the mass, which, undammed, and in full power and thickness, came upon him. His wits did not wholly desert him, or he might have never survived the surfeit. By an effort, the cellar-door was opened, when down rolled the empty barrel, after which, followed the hitherto pent-up flood.

The noise gave the alarm to the household. Grandma declared that it could not be the rats in the cellar, or they had got “awful big.” She and grandpa both got up. Energy was soon imparted to Keturah, who came down stairs in a “skairt” and scant condition, and with characteristic reso-

lution, seized a broomstick, faced the danger, light in hand.

At the condition of the unrecognizable object within view from which all humanity seemed abstracted, she only screamed, and cried,

"It's a species I don't know, 'as I'm alive, Miss Jane—it ain't a nigger nor an ootang—it ain't anything wild or tame—and it's upset the treacle." But with another look, and poke with her broomstick, she caught a view of something human, and recognized the mouth of the bachelor. With a sudden haul, she drew out the gasping, enraged victim, and rushed for male assistance. Sleep, she declared she could not, that night, wondering how Mr. Flint "could be so soft as to pitch into such a mess, besides the awful waste." How he was restored to his original purity, was left on her mind ever a mystery; for although she heard the pump going till morning, she never could pump out of Mr. Flint the cause of the disaster. Out of regard to his feelings, molasses was not for a long time seen on the table at Deacon Selden's.

CHAPTER XIV.

JEANIE awoke the following morning, to a new life—
the inner one in which thought reigns ; the actual world with its external circumstance, was veiled in mystery, by dark revealings.

She did not realize, nor understand all that her father had said, but his sorrows impressed her young heart sadly ; and for the first time she began to think that those once united should live and love one another as the Bible commands. She believed there was fault somewhere, but did not like to know that it reflected on either parent. She had composed herself to sleep, thinking that she would be a peace-maker, such as Christ calls “blessed.” She would—and sweet and thrilling was the thought to the loving child—bring them, at last, together.

As days advanced, though her face at times was pensive, and showed the trace of tears, she was generally cheerful ; for hope like a dove unfledged, nestled at her heart. Her usually bright cheek, lost for a while its richest bloom ; and at times her eyelids looked heavy, but her voice spoke sweeter music, and acquired a greater depth of melody. Its gayest intonation was exchanged for an expressive utterance of feeling often beyond her years. Her hair waved around an unruffled brow ; and cheerily as of old, she skipped and danced with her kid or playmate. And yet one who noted her, as she stole away by herself, sitting down upon the grassy knoll ; or in her chamber at sunset,

or by moonlight, when she would often clasp her little hands, letting her long lashes droop over her stainless cheek ; might tell by the holy expression there revealed, that the child was communing with her heart ; and lifting it to God in prayer.

Though still a child, over her mind had brooded fancies and imaginings, such as would make one older, thoughtful. Tender and deep, were the emotions that swelled it—all rushing into one channel, sympathy and love for her unhappy parents. During her father's visit, she had much sweet communion with him. She seemed wiser and older than when he came—as if new light had entered her soul.

The night before he left, she could not sleep, while thinking how much she had enjoyed his visit ; and that her absent mother would not see him. It could not be impressed upon her, that she did not like herself love him, and would not grieve for his neglect.

She had lain quiet as if asleep, until her aunt's eyes were closed upon her pillow. The moonbeams sheeted the room, in which light, the waving trees cast their flickering shadows. The night breeze rustled through the branches, and the katydids sung their never ceasing tune of disputation. Jeanie had listened to the music, to the sighing of the wind, to the solemn ticking of the clock below ; and growing no sleepier, slid noiselessly from her bed, and to the open shutter, and looked out upon the moonlight atmosphere. It was as light as day ; but a day of softer radiance than the sun ever gilded. It was a holier, sweeter illumination, making the soul melancholy, and the brain reflective.

Sorrowful it was to know that one so young, so childish as she looked, in her white night dress ; her bare feet like the patter of snow touching the carpet, could not rest for a troubled mind. If she could once more see and kiss her

father, she might, perhaps—and yet she dared not. Still she could go to his room, and if he was to speak 'to her, and say "good night" again, she might repose more quietly.

Gliding to his door, she saw him quiet, as if no little heart beat with agony for his trials. She went in and laid her head beside him. Feeling her touch, Mr. Miller awoke, and started painfully.

"My little Jeanie?"

In a hushed voice, as if frightened from sleep, the little girl clung to her father's neck, still shuddering.

"Are you alarmed?"

"No, but kiss me, and do love mamma."

"My darling—you distress me—go to your rest. I will write to you, very, very often, and Arthur will come on your birth-day. Now go—once more, good-bye."

"Say you will love her." The white lips were buried in the folds of his pillow.

"Yes, my child, as God commands us to love."

"Do you pray for her? and will you let her be one of us, in the grave-yard when we die, that we may all go to God together?"

"Jeanie, you will kill me—I cannot listen to you. You will see her next winter, and if an angel can convert her, you can, my darling. Go yourself and pray for your mother."

"May I here? and will you, too?"

No audible words were breathed, but while the little girl clasped her hands, her eyes raised to Heaven, her father's lips moved in fervent petition—and together they uttered "amen."

Heart clasped to heart, the choking good-bye was again repeated; and before Jeanie had roused from her morning slumber, her father had gone.

CHAPTER XV.

THE following week, Jeanie was cheered by letters from all her absent friends; and with the sanguine hope of finally effecting the fond desire of her heart, she resumed her pursuits, and entered as of old into her former pleasures—the expected visit of her brother affording her the most joyful anticipation. She was made happy by the promise of a rural excursion upon her birthday, with a juvenile party who were to be invited to the farm.

The affair was one so novel to Jeanie as to wildly elate her spirits, as the period arrived. It had been arranged by grandpa that the children should take a drive before sunset in his large wagon, and return for their evening sport.

They were all to be adorned with white wreaths, which were to be twined for them. It was the birthday of Jane's damask roses, as well as Jeanie's. A more beautiful one had never dawned. The little girl was up by light, watching the sun coming over the hills, and had already awakened grandpa by singing, "Call me early"—melody accompanied by a loud slam from the door of the bachelor Flint, causing her to hush her music, and proceed on tip-toe to the garden, where with an outstretched hand she was met by the old man, who stood at the gate ready to welcome her.

Sweet to the child's senses was the morning air with its fresh fragrance—she caring not for wet grass or dewy damps—only thinking of the sparkling drops that lay like jewels on the blades, making each floweret leaf a coronet, and each

insect web that curtained the beds of chirping things, like hangings of silver tissue. With bounding feet she trips the clovery path, plucking the honeyed crimson flowers, sucking their sweets, while from the lips of yellow butter-cups, and the brilliant golden rod, she shakes the water-drops, gilding the red of her sweet lips with the amber down.

Then growing momentarily sad with the overwhelming sense of beauty, and the glory of God's universe, she wondered why and for what she was put into a world of so much brightness, where all but hearts were ever gay. Then came the awakening of the child's pure faith, for the moment sleeping; and she knew that it was that she might worship Him, its great Creator.

Her veins were thrilling with the coursing of health's pure blood, and in the joy of her young fancy, she cast out all but thoughts of a happy day, and with the old man talked, making him think of the little robin that waked him, singing by his chamber window.

Bushels of roses she found for her garlands, though they were not choice, nor very beautiful; but as if born of Paradise, they looked to our child Jeanie, clustering in bunches, on low stunted bushes, growing without care or culture; not like the pet damask, now flowering with its twin buds, in the yard. Aunt Jane was expected to cull the brightest for the birthday festival, but, much alarmed, Jeanie saw that Keturah had begun the work of amputation, knowing that the taste of the buxom damsel ran signally to the strongest and biggest, caring little for sweetness or delicacy. No humming-bird was daintier than our little heroine in her choice of blossoms. A "winged jewel" she looked, too, as she hovered in the morning light among the flowers.

But while Keturah was slashing the hollyhocks and poppies, Aunt Jane came from the house, with rubbers and sunbonnet, gardening gloves and scissors in hand.

With delight, Jeanie met her, her own apron full of flowers, while she led her persuasively to the loaded bushes, that, as she said, "broke their backs with beauties." She had in vain tried to lure grandpa from his onion bed to look at them ; and with joy that lighted her eyes, and sparkled in each glad feature, she clasped the hand of Jane, and kissed it in her gratitude. She had at last found sympathy, and who does not love it, from the little one that lifts its wet eyes, and the tiny scratched finger, pleading for the kiss to make it well, to the heart-wearied, whose sorrows are alleviated by the priceless consolation, falling like dew on the crushed flower.

It was not long before the whole household were in the garden, for it was not simply devoted to flowers, these only occupying the borders. Grandma was in the beans, among stacks of poles, around which clustered red and white blossoms, mingled with the long pods ; and Zebedee, who had missed Jane, stood bewildered, looking for her in the squashes. It was evident from his gait that he had taken cold, which Jane had feared when he went out after bathing his feet.

The old couple, by some kind of magnetism, soon found themselves under one vine, while Keturah had drawn Jeanie aside, to tell her that she had engaged Bill Stone to fiddle, and Jim Barbacue to play on the banjo, while she calculated to "perform on the comb." These arrangements were new to Jeanie, and altogether unknown to Jane, though the former had anticipated something marvellous, from the winks and blinks of Keturah as she tucked her up the night before.

But the attention of the latter was attracted to Mr. Flint, who was out of the thickest of the squashes, and sidling along into the currant bushes. She could not resist a laugh, which was never a low one, while her big shears (which she had procured in lieu of the carving-knife), opened and shut

widely to the downfall of the marigold family ; her mouth keeping time to the performance in a succession of audible noises, as she watched the movements of the limping bachelor, who had not made the headway he intended towards Jane ; but instead, stood with his feet entangled in a pumpkin-vine.

"One of 'em is as good as his head, any day," soliloquized Keturah ; then screaming aloud to Jeanie, "here's your posies—plaguy pretty ones, too—they'll do for the chimneys—I must go and see to the curds, and shave the cowcumbers."

"Won't we have such a nice time, Keturah ?" queried Jeanie, who sat on the chain of the garden-gate, tying white buds together.

"'That's as you behave,' as your grandpa says. I think it will be a neat concern, if the doughnuts is riz, but if they ain't, it will be distressid. Mr. Flint looks on the pint of failin' ; don't you think so ?"

Jeanie looked up, and caught the expression of Keturah's face, and burst into a merry laugh.

"I meant failin' to get along side of your Aunt Jane—that's all," said Keturah, stamping down a potato hill. Then with another look at the bachelor, who was playing fox and geese in the corn, and another show of her white even teeth, Keturah went in to get breakfast, singing her favorite song.

"Oh, at the siege of Bellisle—
I was there all the while !
At the siege of Bellisle,
I was there all the while !"

Jeanie flew about the garden paths, though the sun was growing hotter every minute, following her Aunt Jane, who did not answer half her questions, though she smiled as ever, pleasantly.

The raven was coming nearer, and all lark singing was hushed in his croaks. Zebedee had arrived, and his face and tones were dismal enough to excite the never exhausted sympathy of Jane. She knew by his mouth he was unwell.

"I have got a bad cold," said he, putting on another inch of countenance. "I have known for a week it was coming on."

"Have you left off your flannel, or set in a draught?" inquired Jane, looking up from her roses, around which she was tying a snowy ribbon.

"No—colds are nat'r'al to me. There wan't bed-clothes enough on my bed. There never is. My head is all stuffed up!"

"Jeanie, run and get Mr. Flint his over-shoes—he has forgotten them."

"She's so harem-scarem, she can't find 'em."

"I will try to," said Jeanie, throwing her wreath into her aunt's basket, and skipping towards the house.

"Haven't you picked enough of them things? They'll make the house damp. I wish my stockings were knit longer. Betsey makes my clothes so short—she always did. Ain't you coming in sometime to-day? my ears are stopping up."

"Presently. You are impatient, cousin; you had better go in, and ask Keturah to roast you a small onion—one for each."

Keturah was right when she said that Miss Jane was "the patientest crittur on arth."

Jeanie had returned with the over-shoes, in which (after putting on) Zebedee discovered some fish-hooks, which accident not only caused him some delay, but the utterance of a succession of inelegant words. His gratitude for the favor done him was, therefore, not evident.

"Fish-hooks in my feet, Jane!" he concluded. "Do you hear that? do you know that?"

"I did not see them," said Jeanie, apologetically. "They must have been at the toe."

"And so you would put them inside? You small hop! You'll be the death of me, without doubt—without doubt."

Jeanie ran forward in seeming haste. Jane now arose from her seat (a little wicker chair), and with her basket heaped with rose branches, proceeded within.

"Can't you heft it?" said Zebedee, not offering assistance; but pulling up his slip-shod over-shoes which flapped behind him, as he shuffled after Jane. "What are they for?"

"For Jeanie's party," replied the latter, walking daintily on the tips of her little feet, holding up her white skirt, lest it might catch a taint of garden-soil.

"It's the first that I have heard of it," said Zebedee, with a snuff, talking thicker.

"I thought that you knew about it, we have spoken of it so long."

"I don't know that it would be any loss, in the state of my health, if I didn't hear about it at all. I might say something, Jane, if you ever found any time to hear me. It seems to me, sometimes, as if it wouldn't be much lamented if I was dead. I do feel so, and since this small child came, as if I was nobody—an inferior nobody. I am no complainer, you know, but being made no more of than an angle-worm, that feels as comfortable under ground, as in any other situation in life, don't suit me. I might, for all most people care, be as insignificant as Betsey Washburn. There was a time, Jane, when you was younger, that you had feelings; but if you've outgrown 'em, why, it's nothing to me, I suppose."

"I am always ready to listen to you, or to benefit you, cousin—you will feel better after breakfast; perhaps

something you've eaten don't set well on your stomach ; or that you have not recovered from the irritation of the fish-hooks."

"Yes, just so ! fish-hooks and my stomach ! as if pan-cakes and mustard was all I wanted—just so ; from morning till night, and night till morning—no matter how I feel, it's a hot-brick and a plaster, and onions in my ears ; maybe, Jane, you'll be sorry some day, when they are stopped thicker. I suppose you don't know, nor consider, that there's a crack in my door that lets in the wind."

"I am sorry that you have taken cold ; what do you think of a little butter and honey ?"

"All I need is quiet, if you'd only attend to me, and not leave me suffer as you do—and agree to give up children, and unhealthy fogs. I hadn't ought to have come out so early, and shouldn't but for you, Jane."

"It was imprudent, and I fear that you will feel the effects of it."

"I ain't easy till I know where you be, Jane. I know, then, that there's one that don't leave me to sniffer, like Keturah Sprunt. I sometimes think the way I live is unfavorable. I ought to be in some kind of business, and settled. I've heard that old people were unhealthy, and small ones I never was brought up to."

Zebedee was cut short in his addresses to Jane, by their arrival at the gate, where Jeanie stood to greet her aunt—she having flown into the house with her apron full of flowery treasures—knowing that the comers behind would walk slowly.

The breakfast over, Zebedee's bed fixed, and his crack, and ears stuffed, Aunt Jane was ready to help about the cake. Jeanie was allowed to run her straw in it, when out of the oven ; and to help frost the "hearts and rounds," in which occupation, she was engaged, until her cheeks

grew scarlet, and Keturah said, her “hair stuck all ways for Sunday.”

A contrast she made to her quiet aunt (though she was now as tall), who went about doing everything, and seeming to do nothing—wearing a cap of delicate muslin, under which every silken hair was tucked. Jane always cooked with a cap on ; and wore also a white starched linen apron up to her neck, though it might have seemed unnecessary ; for no spot ever sullied it ; and to have seen, at any time, as much dust as could light on a mosquito’s wing, on any fold of her attire, would have created as much marvel, as a begrimed snow-flake on the descent from Heaven.

Jane’s nice and quiet ways were almost provoking to Keturah—not that she did not approve of tidiness, but she liked, to “know when folks were about ;” that she’d “rather be run into by a cart and oxen now and then, than to have people lighting about like butter-flies on tomb-stones ;” but as for Miss Jane, she believcd she was a “sperrit.”

How Mr. Flint knew that the cake-making was over, no one divined ; but as Jane came from the door-way, where she had been washing her white fingers, her arms full of asparagus for the fire-places, he stood between the rooms, and as she was alone, went in to help. He felt an overwhelming consciousness that he had never “told his love,” although he always meant to, when he could with safety. After that, he did hope, he should have some privileges.

The dainty little form was now on its knees, putting in the feathery branches into a brown stone pitcher, among which were mingled some red berries from a Jerusalem cherry shrub ; when with a handkerchief over his head, to keep in the onions, enveloped in a short grey cloak, appeared Zebedee who came close beside the little active busy Jane

"These nubs are pretty and considerable bunchy," said the bachelor.

"Don't touch them, they are damp."

"Did you know," said Zebedee, "that I found my fish-line in a snarl? You never get in a snarl. Do you Jane?"

"I have no occasion to be disturbed." The placid face was now down by the brown jug, her hands on both sides of it.

Zebedee caught indiscreetly hold of one of Jane's thumbs. It was all, belonging to her, that he saw disengaged. At this instant, she needed her muscular strength, which was not much, to place the pitcher loaded with its burden in the fire-place. The action of the bachelor caused her hand to slip, when down came the vessel of water, and asparagus brush, with a violent smash upon the hearth and carpet.

In the inundation, Jane's feet were flooded. With sudden energy Zebedee attempted to make reparation for the mischief—but lest he might take cold, jumped precipitately from the flowing current, and in his sympathetic zeal for Jane, caught her around the waist, and as desperately as a pursued heifer might leap a fence, jumped with her into the middle of the room.

The movement surprised himself, and shocked his companion.

Seeing that one of the little feet, beside his own, was well soaked (encouraged by his first plunge), he dove for it, catching and squeezing it.

"It's a fish," he exclaimed, "I wish it was mine."

It had been Mr. Flint's intention to ask Jane, instead, for her hand, but circumstances had lowered his views, much to the horror and resentment of the fair jug-bearer. Her prudery was alarmed, causing her to suddenly take the

member into her own possession. Zebedee knew by the way she did it, that she had a right to, and that it was not poetically a fish, but a foot, and belonged to Jane.

The bachelor lover was never so delightfully situated. He was exposed to damp, yet he seemed on fire. Cold water had been thrown on his suit, yet he was in a warm perspiration. Jane too was moved, and he was the cause of the commotion. He believed that he had excited a feeling aside from sympathy for his colds and general debility. Though afflicted with "a couple of influenzas," as Keturah said, he didn't mind his propinquity to water, and never knew what happiness was, till he saw Jane with her cheeks so red (the little pale Jane), holding up her white skirts with faint screams, dancing out from under the wing of his old grey cloak. What matter if she was fluttered, wet and angry? He had seen little white bantams bristle up just so, and he thought they looked pretty.

It was no small child now, but the coveted maiden of his bachelor dreams; and for an instant she might have felt that there had been a war in the elements, and that she had been pounced upon by a bird of prey.

An illusion soon dissipated. Jane was consistently practical, as her subsequent conduct and speech testified.

"You had better go into the kitchen and dry," recovering her equanimity.

Agitated with both the exposure and excitement, hearing nothing that Jane said, with his tied-up ears, the bachelor still flounced about like a landed shad, not feeling conscious as yet whether he was in water or out of it.

"Go and *d-r-y*," said Jane, in a louder tone, to Zebedee, who now thrust his head at her from beneath his cloak, with a turtle gesture.

At this instant Keturah appeared from the kitchen to

ascertain the cause of the commotion ; which vision occasioned the abrupt departure of Mr. Flint—Jane going to her room, from whence she soon returned with fresh hose and cap.

Grandma and grandpa, with Jeanie, had now arrived to see the catastrophe, loudly proclaimed by Keturah, which was pronounced by the old people very careless in Jane.

Keturah flew about with mop and broom so fast, grandma thought she was “possessed”—Jeanie, meantime, loading her bent back with the fallen greens, no one having an idea how it could have happened from the simple account given by the now composed maiden. Accidents or disturbances of this kind were uncommon at the farm, consequently this caused a topic for the old couple a good part of the day.

The mischief repaired, the flowers arranged in the porcelain vases on the mantel-pieces, the conch-shells made conspicuous, the parlor put in order (which was never known to be out of that condition), Jane repaired to the second floor, leaving Jeanie making Flora-saucers below.

On Keturah's return from the kitchen, she found Mr. Flint sneezing, snuffing, and drying, in the chimney corner. She politely asked if he “couldn't bake as well further in.” But the bachelor, deeming that he had the privilege of enjoying his cold in his own private way, stayed where he was. Grandma had been down the hill to one of the neighbors, to take home a “blueing-bag,” which she had borrowed, and after telling all the particulars of the accident, and about the party, and Zebedee's cold, came back. Entering the kitchen way, she caught a brief view of the invalid's face, and observing that it was of the same color as his red handkerchief, was much alarmed. (Grandma never forgot that he was an orphan). She asked, not wishing to alarm him, if he had ever had the scarlet fever.

“No,” came from the left corner of his mouth.

"It's only one of your poor turns, I suppose?"

"They get oftener every day I live, and there ain't any way to cure 'em but to let me alone."

"He's mad as a hop," whispered Keturah, while she went on rolling her dough, singing at intervals,

"At the siege of Bellisle,
I was there all the while."

"Got it fishin'," said grandpa, now in the doorway; "let him be; it will work off."

"Yes, work off! my head biling, and my eyes and ears shut up, without any feeling," growled Zebedee.

"I should think you'd roast as well as bile," put in Keturah. "I've got to cook somethin' else pretty soon—

"I was there all the while,
At the siege of Bellisle."

"Zeb will move, I guess," said grandpa, good-naturedly.

Keturah's patience, with which she was not overstocked, was now exhausted. Wishing to bake her biscuit, she came towards the fireplace, and with unnecessary carelessness, caused a downfall of the tongs, also that of a long slice-shovel, that fell against one of Mr. Flint's feet, innocently at the time, reposing in the ashes.

With a prolonged howl, the enraged bachelor caught hold of the unlucky member in both hands, while he berated Keturah, hopping meanwhile around the kitchen on the other, till his face, which had become scarlet with the heating process, burst forth into such a state of fomentation, that the old lady was relieved respecting his symptoms. She knew that "general debility" was all that ailed him.

Keturah betrayed no sympathy, but kept up her song, till Zebedee became nervous, and out of revenge went into the fire again. An event causing the old couple to look at each

other significantly, while each took a pinch of snuff out of the same box. Keturah made unfeeling gestures with a broom, and ugly faces behind the sufferer's back.

"Zebedee was always weakly," said grandma, going into the sitting-room with grandpa, her head shaking.

"Always lazy, Hannah, that's it, old woman."

"Perhaps so; but he never had any bringing up, and he means to get into some kind of business."

"What kind of business is he thinking of, Hannah?" inquired the deacon, sitting down in a rocking-chair.

"Well, Jacob, I don't know; but I am afraid its lottery-tickets."

"Hannah, you don't think so bad of Zeb?"

"I don't know much about 'em, but suppose anything that is easy is best for him; he's been living here going on eleven year, and hasn't found anything to set upon. I'm sorry he's so set after Jane."

"He is, ain't he? they ain't any kind o' match for one another. But it's best to let young people have their own way—we did, you know, Hannah."

"I know we did, Jacob, but you wasn't so weakly as Zebedee, nor so set in your ways; I am afraid he'll never outgrow his complaints."

"Well, it's no use talking about the orderings of Providence, Hannah; but I can't somehow make out Zebedee is made for Jane. The child's company is coming pretty soon."

Grandpa went to the barn. The time was approaching for the juvenile party to assemble. Jeanie had made herself ready, the chief requisites for her toilette being a white dress, her neat little slippers, and papa's parting present—a bracelet of his hair. The least pretty of the floral wreaths was chosen for her head, when with some heart-fluttering, the little girl awaited the advent of her visitors.

Child-like, she ran over the house, before dressing ; to see her flowers, wondering when the wagon would be ready ; and if the girls would all come. Keturah had left her baking to tell her, what a "grand team," the old man was "tackling ;" and she must come back to supper, by five o'clock ; but that her Aunt Jane had forbidden the fiddle and banjo ; and that she was to be sole piper on the comb.

Jeanie's face was left by Keturah, glowing with fresh excitement, and as she stood on tip-toe at the window, her head twined with the rose wreath, her little elastic form poised upon a chair, to see the first arrival, Jane Selden entered the room.

The grace of the child's attitude, so well revealed in the simplicity of her white slip, as it fell off from her shoulders ; the sweetness of expression, beaming in the expectant look, that greeted her, now made brilliant by emotion, awakened fresh admiration for her protégée and pupil.

But the lovely smile vanished, as she met the affectionate, but sad look of the now solemn Jane.

"What is the matter ?"

The anxious inquiry was answered in a troubled tone. "I am afraid, my dear, that after all your pleasant anticipations, we will have to give up this party."

If the child had been struck down, she could hardly have been more surprised or shocked.

"What is the matter ?" she again asked. "They will be here in one minute. I cannot give it up."

"No, my love, it is a half-hour yet to three ; Mr. Zebedee is ill ; and he says the noise of children will distract him."

"Oh, Aunt Jane, I cannot do this for him. It is too late ! It is too late !"

"You can have your drive ; and tell the girls the case."

"Oh, if it was only grandpa, or grandma, or you, or

Keturah, or any one else but he, who hates me so ! His back will ache anyway. It always does."

"My dear Jeanie !"

"You know, Aunt Jane, that his room is away from the parlor and the lawn ; and he goes to bed with the hens."

"You do not speak respectfully, Jeanie—Mr. Flint has taken cold, and it has settled in his back and limbs. He will take some remedy to-night, and feels as if noise would make him worse ; and you know, if he should really become so, we should regret that we had not done all we could for him."

Jeanie was still insensible to Zebedee's case ; and warmly expostulated, the tears rolling plentifully down her cheeks ; on the impossibility of giving up her party.

"My dear, you do not show the spirit I wish you to. I do not insist upon your giving up your birth-day festival ; not knowing that Mr. Flint can be made seriously worse by it. Yet it is possible that any discomposure would result in fever—therefore I will leave the matter for you to decide yourself—and hope you will cast out of your mind selfish considerations and prejudice, against the one you will oblige or disoblige, and remember the golden rule which should govern your actions."

With this admonition, Jane Selden left Jeanie, giving her a kiss of sympathy—assuring her, that if she still determined to entertain the children after their return from their excursion, she would do all she could to make them happy.

Jane went below to prepare a powder for Zebedee, who had taken to his room ; leaving Jeanie with her face buried in the bed. A moment had scarcely elapsed, before Keturah entered ; hers red with wrath, followed by Vulcan, who bounded after her, his ears pricked up, to know the cause of the excitement.

"Well, I'll be blowed, if this ain't the prettiest doings that old fox has been guilty of! If he can't come the wool over Miss Jane, there's no hopper-grasses in Jordan. But I tell you Miss Jinny Miller, if you give up this party for that old herring, I'll be salted down with him till trump day. Hold up your head, small-hop, and tell me, Miss Sober-sides, in what part is Mr. Flint failin'?"

"In his back, and sides, and all his joints," said Jeanie, pursing up her pretty mouth, till it made Keturah laugh to see how solemn it looked.

"Blame his back and sides! I've got a bowl of smart-weed stewin' for 'em now. He ought to be on a gridiron, the aggravatin' old possum. Think of the provisions we've got ready! I wonder if all that's invited has got to be put a stop to. Its plaguy inhospitable! I was to be musicianer too. Now Miss, which is it? death or life to Mr. Flint's joints?"

Jeanie in spite of her tears, burst into a laugh, as Keturah enforced her remarks by assuming a bent position peculiar to Zebedee, when he was complaining; but she soon grew dejected.

"I will go," she replied; "and see what grandpa and grandma say." With her pretty face, solemnized, she met the former coming in from the barn; catching him by the hand, she told him her perplexing situation.

Grandpa's reply was short, but comforting. "Zeb, is always grunting—you'd better have the party. Pretty business! pretty business! he shan't break it up." She flew with a lighter heart to grandma, whose decision was: "The little dear" shouldn't be disappointed—that "Zebedee ought to have a good dose of catnip."

Jeanie's mind was about being biased by their remarks; but passing Zebedee's door she heard him groan; while he muttered to her aunt:

" You don't care if these young-ones do kill me ; and I spose it ain't much matter how soon there is an end put to me—living as we do, Jane ; and I in no kind of business. If we was settled, it would be different. I am at this minute, in all manner of acute agonies."

" Aunt Jane," came in a whisper through the doorway. The latch was gently lifted, when Jeanie saw a grey bundle done up in a large easy-chair, tied at the top with a calves-head night-cap, under which was set a pair of swelled blood-shot eyes. The whole expression was watery.

On the end of the bundle, suspended a pair of legs, the feet of which found lodgment on a junk bottle. They were being parboiled.

Aunt Jane stood opposite the object, cup in hand, with a spoon in the middle. It was evident that it would not take the medicine.

" My love ?" said Aunt Jane, inquiringly, at the door.

" How is he ?"

" Bad, with cold in the head."

" What does the child want ? I do hope the house is going to be kept quiet—without any rackets !"

Jeanie went away.

" Your medicine is ready," said Jane, for the fifth time. -

" I wish, Jane, there was anybody that had any patience with me. Think how long I've waited for you, Jane."

At this crisis, Keturah came in, with a half yard of external irritation, and seeing the situation of Miss Jane with the cup, and the immovability of the grey bundle, took the crockery from the hand of the former, and approaching all that was visible of the bachelor, said, moving the spoon in the thick mixture, with characteristic energy :

" Mr. Flint, there's no time to dally ; make an opening, and prepare lively for your smart-weed !"

Zebedee never resisted his decisive nurse. He felt that

from her there was no appeal. With a slight convulsion, the victim obeyed.

"Down with it—now wipe your ugly mouth, and settle yourself—there's no use gasping like a pizened toad."

Jane was relieved ; the medicine which she had coaxed the bachelor for an hour to take, was swallowed, when he went back into a heap, muttering inside awful language about Keturah Sprunt.

In the meanwhile, Jeanie was trying to make up her mind to do what was right. But if she gave up the party, besides her own disappointment and mortification, there was that of the girls, and the rage of Keturah.

She remembered her aunt's advice, bidding her decide without selfish motives, and without prejudice. She treasured the precepts of her dear father, and the Christian principles she had vowed in her heart, and to her God, should form the groundwork of her character ; and slowly came over her mind, the beauty and loveliness of a self-denying spirit. Could not she, young as she was, commence the work of reformation in her own heart, and make a sacrifice to do good to one who would be ungrateful for the kindness ? She looked at her party attire, at the decorations of her room, at the flower-wreathed seats on the lawn, and pictured the glad faces, now on the way, she was to cloud with disappointment, and darken, perhaps, with anger and mortification. Hard was the struggle in the breast of the generous child, to cause all this reverse of feeling, to gratify what she believed the unreasonable whims of a cross man, who had never regarded her but with dislike and prejudice.

More than twice, or thrice, she clasped her little fast-beating heart, while she exclaimed, "I cannot—I cannot for him!" Then stilling her emotions, calming them with a strong-willed effort, she reasoned (unconsciously) clearly as might an older head, concluding that it was as painful for

the disagreeable to suffer, as for the most patient and lovely, whose sweet-forced smiles, and grateful words, repay for the sacrifice of time and pleasure. Was it not, therefore, selfish to look for payment in doing good? was it not sufficient that it was the command of God, and consistent with a noble spirit—such as actuated the Good Samaritan, when he went about healing the sick, feeding the hungry, and clothing the naked? A half hour's reflection softened the child's bitterness towards him, whom she knew had not reluctantly occasioned her sorrow, causing her to resolve to conquer her rebellious feelings, and to be generous towards her enemy.

Light, silvery and radiant, softly gleamed through the clouds that had enwrapped her. She felt the sweet consciousness of a noble victory.

Jeanie no longer wavered; she had decided to dismiss her company on their arrival, though not without giving them the promised drive. She ran to Keturah, to tell her of her decision, and found the latter in the pantry, performing a popular air on her horn-toothed instrument.

"Hush!" said Jeanie, coming softly towards her. "You know the house must be kept still—Mr. Flint is so sick."

"Cock-a-doodle-do! How do you think you'll dance without a fiddler? Don't be skeered about that pair of joggle-sticks in t'other room. I'll fix him off for you after a while. He's goin' through a spell of contrary friction, now; when that's over, I'll make him easy as a pancake, with a leetle grain of laudanum. Don't open your eyes so, you chicken, he's only got the pip; but you know he must be 'humored,' and that's the way I do it. Your Aunt Jane will spoil that man, there's no mistake, with her sugar-and-water ways. Leave him to me, and I'll pepper him till I'll warrant he'll find his legs. If there's anything that undoes me, it is to see a man of natural parts so weakened."

Keturah commenced on the comb.

"But I have concluded not to have the party, Keturah."

"That's just as I expected—your Aunt Jane will make you over, and Mr. Flint will adopt you—shouldn't wonder, after he and Miss Jane Flint get settled. Which on you is goin' to set up with him? When you get tired, please call me. I'll keep him from drowsing. I tell yon Jinny Miller, this aggravative porcupine ain't soft. He knows what he 's about. He ain't out of his head. But go along, I'm glad you ain't goin' to have the party—such a ransacking as there'd be from garret to sullar. Shucks! didn't I jallop him."

The comb sent forth louder shrieks.

The juvenile assemblage were now coming over the threshold, while Jeanie held her hand to no purpose, over little Mink's mouth, who barked as if each arrival needed his especial announcement: the business performed, he went back to the door-mat quiet as a caterpillar, which he much resembled, when curled up.

Mink was not remarkable for versatility of talent, but the one he had was faithfully improved.

At each fresh bark, the bachelor groaned anew, knowing that it counted another child.

Every eye was on Jeanie's pensive face. In one general cry, came the well worn query, while many of the little party clasped the neck, and kissed their little favorite.

Zebedee was now wild with excitement, hearing the distant murmur of young voices. Jeanie feeling conscious of his misery, conquered her timidity, and performed the unpleasant duty devolving upon her.

Such a time of indignation, lamentation and suppressed grief was never before witnessed, or gone through with at the farm. Still with few exceptions (such went home mad) Jeanie received both caresses and condolence; and

many a little generous heart in the group, felt that she who had dismissed them, was the greatest sufferer.

The drive was enjoyed, and the return of Jeanie made glad by the arrival of her brother.

During the last four years, the tall boy had become a man in appearance. It was hard for the little girl to believe that he was not handsome.

The first evening they spent together, had not been a merry one, as she had anticipated, but it passed happily. She arose early, to inquire for the health of Mr. Flint. Keturah said that she saw him in the porch by daylight, with his fish-pole, and "guessed he was recruterin."

Jeanie ran to her aunt for confirmation of the statement, who could not believe, Cousin Zebedee could be so imprudent. But his room bore evidence of his desertion ; and on looking from the same window, where she had watched in her party dress, for her visitors, she saw buried to the ears in sheep's grey, sitting on a log, the invalid slowly drawing up what looked in the distance to be a pumpkin seed.

" Didn't I tell you so ?" said Keturah. " Didn't I tell you he warn't out of his head—if his head warn't out of him ? He's one of 'em."

" It is all the same," said Arthur, looking at Jeanie's serious face. " Your motives were good, if your compassion was thrown away."

Sunlight gilded the face of the little girl, as she bounded out the doorway, and off in the morning brightness, to show her brother her beautiful " river " in the woods. It was above the spot where Zebedee fished, where she loved to wander—tracing the stream far up among the hills, through a wild pathway, where glittering stones lay embedded ; and tiny fish sported in undisturbed security.

It was the most attractive sight, that greeted her eyes, when she first came a little stranger to the farm, an impression

never worn away: and blind to the beautiful, insensible to all delicious sounds, was the wanderer, who could not like little Jeanie leap from stone to stone, over this silvery, foaming, gushing pathway. Even now we see this laughing brook among the hills, and a child again, sure of a foothold on a mossy stone, splash into the clear sweet current, ankle deep into a pile of bubbling spray, each crystal drop bright as a poet's Helicon. Laughing at the miss-step we bound to the next, scaring away the little shiners, and tread again the veined marble that glitters like frost work in the stream, a rough but princely pathway. The merry little brook cares not a whit, but dances on, sparkling over the rocks, as if it were mad with its own performance, and meant to make its usual noise about it.

A crazy thing it was, and is ; for Jeanie's Meander is no fancy sketch. Embossed in flowers of blue and crimson, it flows still on, singing its never ceasing summer song, and gaily as when with the wood choristers, it awoke our child heroine from her morning slumber, it now dances blithely among the Berkshire hills, to the tune of its own rich music.

Jeanie saw it from her chamber window. It was awake before the birds, even before the old hills, through which it gurgled, had put on their golden veils ; even with the night wind's whisperings, it was leaping and singing in the darkness—catching, through the willow branches that sought its earliest kiss, the star-gleams revealing its beauty, and never wearied, the sunlight found it still rushing, flashing, bubbling—struggling between and leaping over its tiny rocks, until in million opal drops, it dashed over a bolder ledge.

Near its source, Jeanie roved with Arthur, stopping to rest in a deep covert, to listen to the morning birds, and look at the rich landscape about them, on which every shade of green was painted.

"Why do you like to come here so well, Jeanie? one would think this mighty river, was full of golden sands."

"But if there are not golden sands, there are here a million brighter and prettier things. Hark! hear that woodpecker hammering!"

"Yes, the little mechanic! but I hear a noise that is louder—the rail-car thundering away among the hills—it sounds like the rush of a fall. How fat and lazy the cows look trying to see their huge noses in the water. Ain't you afraid of them?"

"Afraid of cows! good old souls! no I love them—old humdrum poky things—chewing away from morning till night. Don't dumb animals seem to you like people?"

"Yes: I saw a brood of turkeys this morning skulking through the high grass, looking, I fancied, like some secret order, as they kept fellowship. They made as they went along, a kind of sorrowful whistle, solemnly mysterious and sentimental, as if they held themselves bound to make no revelations, without a masonic sign."

"Was the procession a long one?" laughed Jeanie.

"Not very—a couple of guinea hens followed in speckled mantles, but the turkey order were too stiff for their company, and so they waddled off canting their own creed. I could not but fancy they enjoyed the impudence of a straddling peacock, who scattered the whole black society, by a show of his Argus-eyes. Between you and I, Jeanie, it is my opinion, that the old fellow considers himself slaveholder of the whole troop, and would without any qualms of conscience turn their desultory pickings to his own individual account."

"Keturah says: 'It's curious to see how critters are like grown folks.'"

"Here's a petrified bird's claw or something like it. I must send it to Grandma Castleman."

"Does she like such—gawky things?" said Jeanie, puzzled for an adjective.

"Yes, that was the reason she was so fond of me—you don't remember Castlemont?"

"You must have been happy there."

"It was a beautiful place, but it will probably never be our home again. Would you be jealous if you knew that there was a sweet girl that I love beside you, Jeanie."

"Oh no, then I should have a sister. But we will have a home before then. I have a secret to tell you. I am going to see mamma next winter, and I know," the tears now came into Jeanie's eyes, "that I can make her love papa."

The arms of Jeanie wound as of old about her brother's neck, while she plead earnestly for his influence. How could he, who had witnessed so much sorrow and misery, wish to unite again those separated.

Silence was Jeanie's only answer; but with his lips pressed to the brow that lay on his shoulder, Arthur Miller again vowed to do all that lay in his power, for the happiness of his beloved sister. "I am glad," said he, "that you know of the separation of our parents, but my dear Jeanie, you will, I fear, find the task which you undertake, no light one. It is not easy to mingle oil and water."

"Don't—don't," said the little girl with fervor, "take away my hope; it is all I live for. I am amused and happy because I cannot be miserable long; and I am so silly as to laugh at everything funny; and be pleased with every thing beautiful; but I do, Arthur sometimes in the midst of all my happiness, feel very badly." She burst into tears.

"My little sister, be courageous—be brave. Trust to the great Pilot. He will guide you through the billows. Did you never note in the morning, the light of the sky grow dim, as the silvery fleece you watched, passed like

wavelets over the sea of blue, and in its place a black swell appear, as if drifting towards you ? Though you might sadden with the vision, you did not doubt that the sun was behind the cloud. So you must believe and trust : the azure will, I believe, succeed the sable in your sky, and the light beyond be full of glory. In my shortsightedness, I would have had your home one of undimmed light and beauty. From the hour you were born, you were to me the darling of my boyhood. God only knows how I have cherished your memory in my absence from you ; but my sweet Jeanie, it has been with fear and trembling, for a nature so ardent, so willful, so passionate. How then can I be grateful enough, for the change that I see wrought in you ; for the influences that have borne upon your character ; such as have taught you to control and subdue your imperious will ; and to forget yourself in your duty to others ? We must try to see the finger of God in all this. But for the trials of your childhood, you might never have known the need of faith or repentance. I see that you strive to conquer selfishness—you have made a good beginning in the battle with your foes."

In a soft agitated whisper, she said :—

"Don't think I am so much improved, I find it very hard to do or feel right. I wish you could be always with me to teach me."

"He who can give you the earnest of His spirit, can make you pure in His sight. I must necessarily leave you, but it will be with a sweet feeling of confidence that you will not rest day or night, until you can say, 'I am the Lord's, let Him do as seemeth to Him good.'"

"I am too proud ever to be a Christian. Why do you laugh, Arthur ?

"At your inconsistency, Jeanie. Believe that you are not naturally good, and your pride will not hurt you. St. Paul

preached in ‘weakness, and in fear, and much trembling.’ I am glad that you feel the need of humility, it is one of the sweetest of Christian graces.”

Wandering towards home, Arthur and Jeanie reached an eminence, which in the morning sun was refreshing to look upon. Around them rose an ocean of swelling acclivities, far greener than the emerald waves they imaged, as they lay piled in their grandeur ; and more sublime, for like the great Eternal who formed them, they were immovable and everlasting.

To the long closeted student, the air and verdure of the beautiful hills among which he was born, were a luxury. The brother and sister returned ; their faces glowing with the exercise enjoyed, though a cast of pensiveness shaded the brow of the latter.

It was no detraction from the loveliness of Jeanie’s face, that thought had fixed its gentle impress there.

Breakfast awaited the ramblers, bringing joyfully together once more, at their hospitable table, the venerable couple, and their two beloved grandchildren (as they deemed them). It was a meal partaken with emotions of silent gratitude by the old people, and seemingly with rich zest by the late afflicted invalid.

Keturah sat in the door-way, breaking a horn comb (her dead lyre), and “was happy,” as she expressed herself, “to see that Mr. Flint was able to relish his ham and eggs.”

CHAPTER XVI.

CLOSETED in the chamber of a city hotel, Mr. Miller and Mr. Hamlin counselled together. The two were widely contrasted. The plain unassuming man wore now a dejected countenance, his sunken eyes and paleness of cheek indicating feeble health. Slow in speech, reflective in his moods, open and frank as a child in his confidence, he differed from the man of physical and mental strength, whose every movement and expression spoke energy, decision and ardor.

While abroad they had met, and though the difference of fifteen years existed in their ages, they became intimate, and Mr. Hamlin the confidential friend and adviser of the elder.

Years had not alone made them to differ ; and yet an invisible chord linked them. Though comparatively young, Mr. Hamlin was one who had drunk life's spiciest and most sparkling cup to satiety, and now thirsted for its limpid waters. The mind of Mr. Miller was to him as that of a child—and now simple and earnest was the relation of his woes. The betrayal of deep emotion, which he often exhibited, when he spoke of his wife and child, in another, he would have viewed as weakness ; but with genuine sympathy he listened to the tale, feeling that the heart of the wounded had been laid bare to him, as an unrolled sheet, and that its surface was pure as the sky.

With his intuitive knowledge of the workings of the

sonl, and keen insight into character, he saw that Mr. Miller had been the dupe of artifice ; and that the experience of five and forty years, had not taught him that worldly wisdom, which penetrates the secret channels, and opens the hidden springs of the human mind ; though in his pecuniary transactions with men, he had learned mechanically and systematically, the way that leads to fortune. Mr. Hamlin also saw that while heart-wearied, declining in health, with perverted vision, that he was incapable of vindicating the case he at times resolved to sustain—that of wrong inflicted by a wife, from whom he would be divorced.

Till a late hour the friends conversed, when Mr. Hamlin became earnest in his efforts to dissuade Mr. Miller from his projected movement.

“ I am not unacquainted with Mrs. Miller,” he continued. “ I believe her to be a woman of no ordinary character. Her greatest faults arise from her education, by an unprincipled, weak mother. Her passion for admiration, and her utter disregard of truth,” Mr. Hamlin spoke with severity and harsh judgment, “ comport with the whole falsity of her life, which I know to be, one acting lie. Still, sir, I believe her to be too proud to compromise her reputation ; and to yield her heart to an inferior, would be as unlikely in her, as the falling of a star. You may think,” he spoke with emphasis, “ my comparison too elevated for its object ; but Mrs. Miller is a woman of brilliant intellect, with a heart capable of intense emotion ; and withal accomplished. She is not only capable of inspiring, but of being herself enslaved by passion. But mark me, she will never sacrifice herself. The man she loves must be her superior. She has none such in her wake.”

“ What hope is there then for me in a reunion with her ?”

Mr. Miller handed a letter, postmarked New Orleans. Mr. Hamlin opened it, and read :

"Mr. Launcelot Lawrence wishes to be informed whether the Hon. A. M. intends to prefer any claims upon Mrs. Ex-Miller by reason of any prior right or title; if so, Mr. Lawrence would like the matter settled without delay, as in case of her being unclaimed during the period of three months ensuing, he may possibly accept of such terms as she, in her affectionate regard for him, may be pleased to make."

With a sneer, Mr. Hamlin laid down the note after perusal, half irritated that Mr. Miller could be annoyed by a communication from such a source, or that its reception should rouse fresh indignation towards his wife.

"If you value your own peace of mind," said he, "or the character of Mrs. Miller, throw this into the fire, and let your suspicions escape with the smoke. Mr. Lawrence can give you no trouble."

Mr. Miller settled into his usual contemplative mood, from which he now seldom aroused.

Silence for some time ensued. It was now advancing towards the hour of ten. The two had resorted to cigars and the evening papers, when the door opened, and with precipitation a woman entered, followed by a little girl, neither of whom were at first recognized by the gentlemen.

The elder was not bewildered when he heard the voice of Keturah Sprunt in loud exclamation, as she threw herself on a seat, with seeming desperation.

"Well, if I hain't been through Babel, besides the Dark Ages, to get this child along, 'cause she was possessed to come; but it's no kind o' compensation to see this city in all its corruptions, to go through such vile treatment from robbers and 'sassins on the way. But, Mr. Miller, I've brought

her, in all her tears and innocence, and if you ain't despisable, you'll see that we have something to eat, and ain't outraged. I knocked down two Injuns, besides niggers and slaveholders, who wanted to get our baggage ; I was all-fired glad we didn't bring any, and before I get a wink o' sleep, I want to be convinced that this building is bolted, and won't be set a-blazin'."

While Keturah was pouring forth her account of the treatment she had received in travelling, and on her arrival at the hotel (which she still continued for the benefit of Mr. Hamlin), Jeanie had crept to her surprised father's knee, where she sunk, and laid her head, crying :

"Don't send me away—I have come to see you, though Aunt Jane forbade it. I can't tell you all, I am so tired. Keturah didn't know the way, and went to a great many houses ; but your dreadful letter to Aunt Jane brought me, and I have come to say that I cannot be your child any more, if you treat poor mamma so. I know what divorce means, and I ran away by myself, only Keturah followed me—and I'm so glad we are here, we had such a time."

The little girl now choked with sobs—the tears running down her face. Her father could only hold her to his breast and say, "Be calm, be still, my child."

"That's the way she's lost her character all the way ; and I come off in my every-day clothes. I was so mortified with her, and she so distracted like. She'd better have a piece of pie, or a doughnut. I ain't particular what I has, so it's soon, and ain't cooked by niggers or Irish."

"I don't wish anything—only I want to talk to you, papa, and don't please, be angry with me."

The attitude of the graceful little figure as it clung to her father's form, was full of touching eloquence. Mr. Hamlin gazed upon it, as if rapt with some beautiful dream. Jeanie looked up, for the first time seeing him; her lip trem-

bling, and her eyelashes heavy with dropping tears. He knew that he saw the dancing child, that he had rescued from the troop of noisy villagers.

As his eyes fastened upon hers, the recognition was mutual. She was now in her fourteenth year, and had much changed since then. Her form had expanded into rounded loveliness, but to his eye she was still the pantaletted little girl, whom he had never forgotten—a vision reminding him of one more beautiful.

He extended his hand. With a shrinking, half fearful look, she said :

“Have you come to help divorce poor mamma ??”

“No, no—why should you think so ??”

“He wrote Aunt Jane that he was engaged talking with his lawyer, and I supposed you might be one.”

Mr. Miller had rung for refreshment for the travellers. Keturah jumped up, and snatched it from the hands of the servant, her countenance betraying satisfaction.

“I hain’t one grain of appetite, but if I knew everything was clean, I might regale some. That feller that went out has a mighty milk-and-molasses complexion. What’s his calling ??”

Jeanie could not be persuaded to taste food, and vainly the gentleman attempted to comfort her.

As she confessed, she had defied the commands and entreaties of the household, who opposed her leaving (a project that they did not realize that she would fulfill); but after hearing the announcement that her father was intending to make application for a divorce from her mother (intelligence imparted to her by Zebedee), with fear and horror of a deed so dreadful, in her estimation, she frantically resolved to seek him.

Fearing it was too late to prevent the departure of Jeanie, Keturah surprised the household by rushing after her—

reaching the latter just in time to go with her on her journey.

The reception of news so afflicting to the child (which she realized would effectually debar the reunion of her parents) and the impulsive departure of the little girl, had not occupied fifteen minutes ; but now that the excitement of her journey was over, and she had reached her father, fear for the consequences of her temerity, added to her anxiety about the separation, caused her to sink in terror upon the carpet : hiding her face, she continued to weep.

The hour of eleven found the young traveller wearied ; all present were strenuous that she should go immediately to rest ; but the habitually obedient Jeanie was firm in her refusal, while she, burst forth with a fresh appeal to her father, begging him not do anything so dreadful as the act she feared.

With decision, Mr. Miller told her that he could make no pledge of his word to that effect ; but directed her to obey his commands, and to retire.

The child was immovable.

“ Unless you become calm, and more reasonable,” said Mr. Miller, “ I shall be obliged to separate from you during your stay.”

“ And won’t you say you did not mean that letter ?”

“ No, Jeanie. It is possible that I may seek a divorce from your mother.”

“ Then,” said the little girl, exposing fully her tearful face, “ then, I will go with her away, too. I will stay by her always, wherever she is—I will love you no more, if you will not live with dear mamma.”

Mr. Miller pushed her gently from him ; and walked the room with his head bowed on his breast. At the moment, she came beside Mr. Hamlin. Putting her hand in his, she said :

"Couldn't you love my dear beautiful mamma? if she was your wife, would you be so cruel?"

With a wild sob, the wearied, distracted, child tottered forward as she spoke. Mr. Hamlin caught her in his arms. Saying nothing for one moment, he held the little pleader, then removing her, said:

"Jeanie you are cruel to talk to your father so—go to him and comfort him."

"Mamma has nobody to love her."

Looking at her father—seeing him still walking, she went towards him. Keturah now sat upright in her chair, asleep—her head coming down occasionally with a break-neck jerk upon her breast.

"Ring that bell," said Mr. Miller addressing her.

While the aroused sleeper was looking in vain for the article, Mr. Hamlin performed the service.

"Go to bed," said Mr. Miller now sternly to Jeanie, as the servant appeared. She dared not disobey.

"Good night." Mr. Hamlin extended his hand.

"Will you be my friend—mamma's friend?" Jeanie looked up earnestly.

"If you will promise me never to be so passionate in your language. You have grieved your father. Good night."

"May I not kiss you, papa?"

Mr. Miller sat down, drawing Jeanie towards him. "Do. Do you think this is honoring your father?"

"Oh papa—I feel as if I was in a dark wood, as if my dear parents were separated by long lonely paths; and all my wandering back and forth, would not bring them together, and it makes me so wretched, that I cannot do right or feel right."

"Believe that God is in all our paths. Go now, Jeanie."

She went with Keturah to the strange room; but long hours after, while she lay still with her eyes wide open, looking at the stars, trying to pray—she heard her father's footsteps below, still walking.

CHAPTER XVII.

M R. MILLER had had a sleepless night. Till dawn he paced his solitary room, unconscious of the hours that flitted by. In those moments of spirit agony, he felt that the keenest, most piercing darts, which like daggers enter the soul, to the human eye are unrevealed—that God only knoweth the heart's bitterness.

To Him “the beginning and the end,” who had loved him since time was, he prayed that he might be submissive to His chastisements, and bear what He might inflict. Had he not been saved, he asked himself, the sin of idolatry? and his child from the love of the world, by the affliction which uprooted his desire to continue in a state of being, made miserable to her and himself?

Had not his cup been replete with bitterness, when disgrace, like a blackened pall, covered his household gods—when he had been scorned in private, and in public pointed at, as the victim of domestic strife—but that this little one, should turn to ashes the expiring embers on his hearth-stone, by reproaches accusing him of cruelty towards this once passionately loved idol, her mother?

Had she no longer an earthly altar of confidence, to which to bend her knee—no star in the firmament that canopied her youthful hopes, to which to look, saying, “Be thou my beacon—my guide through life’s quicksands?” Must her sweet child-dreams be turned to night-mare horrors, while clasping her little heart, she cries: “I have

no home of love to which to flee, for the authors of my existence have girded it about with thorns ; and for no sin of my own, but for the animosity and unchristian warfare of my parents, I am left to struggle alone—henceforth a wanderer." Had it not been sorrow deep enough, that his childlike trust in woman had been crushed—the flowers that bloomed in the garden of his heart, been trampled upon, their sweetness turned to the bitterness that no apple of Sodom ever brought to the lip ; but that he must poison the pure mind of his guileless child, by tales of a mother's deceit and falsehood ; or have her believe him a fiend in cruelty, the source of all her misery ? Must there be no solace for her bruised spirit, no breast on which in faith, to lay her aching head—folding her little arms in holy trust ?

A quick but light tap was heard at the door. He opened it, thinking to admit his child ; but instead, a shadowy form rushed past him—as dead leaves might on the blast of autumn. Perhaps it was that out of the antiquated hat, and moth eaten tippet, appeared the cadaverous features of Mrs. Castleman, which brought to mind the shrivelled emblems of decay, and in the beholder, deadened all thoughts of brightness.

Declining health producing feverish action of the brain, aggravated the despondency of the now troubled parent ; and when one, from whom he believed he had for ever parted, came with her well remembered beseeching grin into his presence, he started back, as if the ghost of all evil had appeared before him.

Recovering himself, the son-in-law bowed to the spectral figure—avoiding the three little ungloved fingers put out, to creep like bird-claws over his.

"I heard you were in affliction," opened the whitened sepulchre, "and have come to condole with you, and to ask

when you have heard from our beloved Elinor. Your habitation in this world-wilderness—so barren of human sympathy, is a contrast to the lovely hours of your sojourn at my hospitable home, where you were made blissful by a union with my sweet child. It was then hardly expected that you would cast her off to the biting winds of Heaven, and her aged parent into an abyss of degrading destitution."

"Mrs. Castleman"—

"Still I cherish towards you a forgiving spirit, and I trust a godly one, for I know that 'he who troubleth his own house, shall inherit the wind,' and my fleecy garments, (the widow held up her apparel) cannot stand much of a breeze, and I should feel reluctant to see a gown Sister Sally had worn for forty years, making cobwebs in the sky. Yes, son-in-law, to show my respect for you, I have come with a petition, for your contribution towards a benevolent project (the widow unfolded a sheet of paper) drawn up by my own pen. You will perceive that it is started by a number of respectable destitute widows, of whom I am at the head. We are anxious as a body, four of us composing it (Mr. Miller thought that it would take more of such as the widow presented), to keep a respectable carriage, that we may be enabled in inclement seasons to visit the graves of our lamented relatives."

"I have no time to look at it," said Mr. Miller, retreating. "I do not approve of the object."

"It is not only," went on Mrs. Castleman, "a charitable, but an economical institution, besides reminding us in a respectful manner, of the equipage in which we rode in our youth, but it smooths the pathway to the grave, and saves (the old lady showed her shoes) the expenditure of the sole."

"I cannot listen to you, madam."

"Must I feel, after my trembling limbs have borne me to

your door, as saith the poet, that I am to be thrust forth in a pitiless manner ? After sheltering you, feeding you—though you was never a great eater—and, as it were, fleecing you as the sheep becomes fat and woolly in the fold of the shepherd—giving you the lamb of my youthful and innocent widowhood, the only hope of my respected Peter ; and now you will not cast your mite into the Lord's treasury, that I may be borne respectably to my husband's grave ! Am I a burden to you, or to any of my family tree, of which I am a lopping, and of late years a fruitless branch ? Don't I go from house to house picking up crumbs, and like a female Lazarus, don't I lick their dogs, as it were, to pay for my board ?”

“ Madam ! I have made you independent, and I have reason to believe that you receive a handsome annuity.”

“ Does my right hand know what my left hand doeth ? and do you think, son-in-law, that your paltry pittance will enable me to ride in a hearse ? Don't I go about in an humble way, showing a contrite spirit, for the disgrace you have brought upon my family ? If it were not that my hairs were numbered, I would apply for public relief. Havn't you taken away from me my only and beloved child, and, as it were, cast her into a den of lions.”

“ Madam !” said Mr. Miller, becoming exasperated, “ are you in need ?”

“ Oh, no, I need but little to carry me to my lonely grave. I hope you will see that I am laid out along side of Peter—a pine coffin will do. I shall leave my reliques for some of the family tree, and my remains to the town. It is hard for them that have seen better days, to die poor and despised”—

The widow put some slits of darned cambric to her nose, which she blew into fragments, rendering the whole useless for the meanest branch of her relatives.

"Will this relieve you?" Mr. Miller handed his mother-in-law a fifty dollar note.

At this moment, Jeanie came with her gentle footstep into the presence of her father and grandmother. With the grace of a fawn she approached the latter, her face pale and anxious, looking up doubtingly for a welcome.

The striking resemblance of the child to her mother at her age, together with her salutation to her father, convinced the old lady that she saw her grandchild. Tucking the bill handed her, complacently in her pocket with the slit cambric, she ejaculated :

"Do I see my Elinor—my little Elinor? You sweet angel! you beautiful cherub! come to your grandmother's despised old bosom. Don't you know me? or have you been taught to consider me but an abigail?"

Not recognizing the frail, attenuated being, whose address had embarrassed the child, she at first shrunk from an object so unattractive; but being well bred, soon put forth her hand to the clasp of her relative.

With a shiver of horror, Mr. Miller saw the contact of the two beings whom it had been his aim to for ever separate; and as he might have viewed an angel child unfurl its white wings for a descent to fallen spirits, so he witnessed the embrace he could not prevent.

"How sweet it is to see the little beautiful creature!" said Mrs. Castleman, holding up Jeanie's face with both hands close to her own. "And now, tell me, pretty little Nelly, what has naughty papa done with poor mamma? Won't you come and live on a crust with your poor old grandma? She was not always such a miserable object as you see her, pretty one. Grandma used to ride in her carriage, when your papa married your lovely, unfortunate mamma. If you will come home with me, I will give you a dried butterfly—such as your poor old grandma has got to be. But you don't

like such poor relations, do you, with such a grand papa, and never mean to live with your mother any more, now that he has put her into the fiery furnace, like the three Shadrachs?"

With her little face blanched with terror and feeling, Jeanie shrunk away, not as usual, fleeing to the side of her father, but stood, as if rooted with sorrow, dumb with agony, her tongue sealed, her dark blue eyes dilated and fixed upon the stone wall beyond the window.

Again her grandmother spoke to her.

She must reply to her mother's only parent, who loved the persecuted being, torn from her and sent away to die in anguish. She looked up into the face now shrivelled with malicious joy, seeing not in it the triumph of a fiend who has found a chord on which to play, twisting as if with death-grips, his victim's heart, and from it to the morning sky, wondering if such as she belonged to the beautiful world above it. Still recoiling, she whispered, "No, I cannot go with you, grandma, but I don't despise you. I will give you this, if you would like it. Mamma gave it to me, and I value it; but you are poor and old, and she is your child, as I am hers." It has her name upon it—'Elinor.' I would not give it to any one else but her mother."

The little gold band was drawn from the child's arm, and handed shrinkingly to her grandmother, who, seeing the metal, clutched it in her grasp, while she said :

"You little humbird! You will not let me starve—what is that you wear on the other arm?"

"That is made of papa's hair."

"There is a diamond in the clasp, little Nelly. You couldn't give me your papa's hair, could you? just to send your poor dear mamma, who used to love him so?"

Quicker than thought, the bracelet was removed, while the tears rolled from her eyes, as she said: "Oh do send it

to her, and tell her to send papa one of hers—couldn't you like it—wouldn't you keep it, if you knew that it had once laid on dear mamma's white forehead?"

The question now plaintively addressed to Mr. Miller, received no reply, but as if his child had been poisoned by a reptile, he drew her from the extended hand of her grandmother, exclaiming :

"Jeanie, if you wish to give away the bracelet woven of your father's hair, bury it ; but never link it with that golden clasp. She who would unite them, has made their donors miserable ; and avarice now causes her to steal them from you."

As Mr. Miller spoke, he looked upon the lineaments, which rage and enmity had made hideous, and said, confronting the miserable wreck, to his eye embodying falsehood :

"Woman ! you have transformed one, who might have been one of earth's angels, into a being deserving only pity and contempt. You polluted her young heart, until it was but a fit receptacle for your vile teachings—you taught her deceit with your lying tongue, and her words to drop as a honey-comb ; and well may it be on your death-bed, if her end is not bitter as wormwood. With her mother's milk, she sipped the poison of your corrupt nature, and well have I been rewarded for my credulity—but mark me (the sleeping lion was aroused from his lair) if you but breathe on her innocent child—infesting her with the foul miasma of your mouldy, rotten principles, I will withdraw from you your income ; and like the starved wretch you pretend to be, you shall sink to your grave, before I will keep you above it to ruin my child. Jeanie," he continued, turning to the trembler beside him, "you have heard my words to your grandmother, and now beware how you cross her path. To her, you owe all the sorrow of your childhood."

" Didn't I tell you so ? didn't I tell you so, little Nelly ?"

The enraged spectral visitant, rattled and chattered like a storm shaken bough, crackling in the wind. " Didn't I tell you, that he despised your poor old grandma, who gave him her beautiful child ? No, I won't touch you (the old woman retreated with a show of humility), my little pure spirit, lest I might taint you, pretty one. Your poor despised grandma hasn't got any beautiful home to cherish you in, now, nor to ask your beloved mamma to come home to (the darned cambric was brought in use). No—she and I must die in a starved garret by ourselves. Take back your gold bracelet, little Nelly ; it will look prettier on your beautiful little white arm, just like your sweet mother's ; than on an old scorned woman like your poor old grandma. But let me kiss it first—for it makes me think of my little Elinor, that was once as happy and pretty as you. There it is on the floor—pick it up—don't come near me, I am not made of the same flesh and blood as you be. Your papa's family were all sanctified from the birth."

" Don't talk so grandma, keep it. I don't want it now, I shall not want any-thing pretty any more—may I go back to the farm to-day, papa ? "

" Yes, yes, and oh ! would to God you had remained there, that you had not left it, to witness a scene like this ! Tell Keturah to prepare you immediately for your return."

Keturah now came to the door, when Mr. Miller asked her in. Seeing Mrs. Castleman, she looked at her as she might at any other transparency, wondering of what chemicals she was composed.

In her anger the widow seemed to have weasled up into smaller dimensions ; and as the buxom girl according to her ideas of good manners, approached her—giving her broad palm to the only two little digits observable, saying, " How dy-do, marm," the conjunction seemed likely to prove as disastrous as unwelcome to the poor shell of aristocracy.

With a half shriek, the old lady retreated from the gripping hand that had nearly crushed the little fingers caught hold of (not offered), while she gathered up her silk robed remains, and the neglected bracelet, which she put with the fifty dollar note, and rustled out as she came in—not with a smirk, but with such tight compression of the thin lips over her teeth as to cause in the beholder the fear, that a sudden loosening of the strings that pursed them together, might produce a never closing grin.

As she departed, without an adieu, Keturah opened the door, and stretching her neck, looked after her, until she was out of sight, when with a succession of short chuckles, she said :

“ My senses is failin’ or else that aged person that went out, is made of gamaribac and jelly. I am afraid I spiled the shape of one of her fingers, it seemed to crumb up so. She’s a pretty codfish ! Well, Miss Jinny, I don’t know as you’ve been entertained, but I’ve seen enough of the city.”

“ I will go with you—good bye, papa.” The little mournful face looked up at the features grown haggard since morning, and there caught their expression of overwhelming tenderness.

“ I am sorry I came—will you forgive me ?” The sweet voice trembled.

“ Yes, my daughter. Is there no one that you can trust ?”

“ Yes, papa, there is One that is good.”

“ Go then, and lay all your sorrows at His feet. It was not meant that you should be drawn to your God with your eyes undimmed, and your faith unshaken in those you love. It is so ordained by Him who ‘ doeth all things well,’ that by strange and rugged paths, my little lamb shall find the fold of her Saviour. You will not wander always in the ‘ dark wood’ my child, through the dim aisles where no light

is—fearing, doubting—seeing ‘none good, no not one.’ Like the bow after the storm, hope will gild your horizon, and the Sun of Righteousness there arise, with healing on his wings.”

Rapt in holy zeal for his child’s conversion, Mr. Miller knew not that the little being to whom he was murmuring words of pious import, had received a severer shock in his language and bearing to her aged relative, than his mysterious abandonment of her mother had ever given her. She now listened as to a Pharisee, believing that from his lips fell words of hollow mockery. Yearning as her heart did for the union of her parents, could she now wish to bring her discarded mother back to him, who could send hers in suffering and poverty from his presence?

The child’s consoling faith in her father, had lost its beautiful tinge, and as the rosy sky of morning darkens with rising mists, so over Jeanie’s trustful mind came a thickening disc, shadowing it with desponding doubt.

She had been disappointed in the absence of her brother, and with a heart sadder, but more composed, she made her final farewell to her father, and left with Keturah for home.

Much to her surprise, Mr. Hamlin was at the carriage door, and she was still more amazed when he seated himself beside her, while earnestly he looked into her sorrowful face.

“I have another little passenger under the seat, will you take him with you, and care for him?” said he, smiling.

“I know,” a gleam coming through the mist, “what it is by its chirping; poor little bird!”

Keturah, who felt that the value of her protection had been called in question, by the assumption of their companion, was indignantly silent.

“I want you to cherish him for me, will you?”

“Did you take him out of his nest, and away from the

old birds who feed him?" An expression of pity mingled with the sweet play of the child's features.

"No, little Jeanie, he never knew, like you, the charm of a woodland home—the fragrance of the country. I am sure you will feel for him, and let him share your enjoyment, if its light and sweetness comes through gilded wires. I know from your looks that you like to impart happiness, if but to a bird."

"Nothing I love will stay with me."

Mr. Hamlin was struck more with the confiding tone of the little girl, than with the remark. Her clear blue eyes were raised fully to his. Around her mouth a touching expression of sorrow lingered, as she half whispered her plaintive words.

The feeling of tender interest awakened for the child deepened. The carriage had reached the cars; still he remained with her, taking a seat beside her.

"You've got my seat," said Keturah warmly.

"I will provide you with another as good." The ousted escort was silenced, when again the child, bird and her companion, made a trio in proximity to her.

"Why do you go with me?"

"To take care of the bird," replied Mr. Hamlin, smiling.

"Do you love birds?"

"Yes, Jeanie. How long they have sung—ever since they warbled in sunny Eden: we have no reason to think their song was any blither in Paradise, or they were more beautiful, than now. It is a sweet thought that the flaming sword did not banish them, and that no blight ever hushed their music. They have all the innocence they had on Eve's bridal morn."

"Noah must have loved the little dove that went out seeking land for him, and those who looked out for his return were as glad to see him back as to see the olive

twig in his mouth. I wonder if there will be birds in heaven. The Bible speaks of them as having 'white wings covered with silver,' and of 'feathers with yellow gold.'"

"A bird is the only existing earthly thing that is fetterless like the spirit. The Psalmist says, 'Oh, that I had the wings of a dove.' They seem to me, to as much bespeak God's glory as the stars—holy, pure and imperishable as they are. As the heart pants with upward longings, they soar in the blue ether, and so pure they seem, that fancy might carry them to the golden gates. Then, too, they have all hues that ever dyed rainbow, gem or flower; and if angel spirits come about us, in no guise could we fancy them with sweeter satisfaction, than as little birds. I know that you have plenty of these unimprisoned choristers around you, and so I give you one to love and pity, because he is not in his natural element, and has no parent bird to succor him."

"Why did you bring him to *me*?" Jeanie's face gleamed with feeling.

"God sent him, just as He will provide a home of love and sweeter companionship some day for you. But why are you not happy in your present home?"

"I was once, but no one, not even Aunt Jane, knows how I feel, or why I lie awake at night, and when I go away by myself, they think it is because I like to rove; but they do not know that I think of things I cannot explain or understand, and that my life seems useless as little Mink's. Dear Aunt Jane is good, but I feel bound as if in a prison, when I am chained down to the opinions and restraints she puts upon me. I often feel a desire to break away—to scream out, do anything to make the house less orderly and quiet. Keturah's fun is all my amusement, and we have some good laughs. Then I think I should be so happy with my mother, for I know she would understand me, and love me as I long to be loved."

" You think she has all your enthusiasm—that is what you mean—you yearn for sympathy, but what if you found her unlike yourself?"

" I would try to resemble her. Do I look as she did?"

Mr. Hamlin scanned the pure face that looked up eagerly, craving a reply which required a comparison he would avoid. Thick about his heart came memories of 'love wildered' hours, when dizzy with passion, he drank a fevered chalice. The innocent face still looked up, and roused the dreamer. He contrasted her with one, his brain too vividly imaged; and as the sun streamed across her brow, gilding her silken hair, he thought it not mockery to deem it fit for an angel's crown. Yes, she was like her mother, but so pure—so stainless.

" You are not so beautiful," he replied, " but were I to advise you, Jeanie, how to seek happiness, I would say—give up dreaming, and be guided in your pursuits, even in thought, by one whom you can trust. At present, you are oppressed with a vague grief; you are conscious of great wrong somewhere, and you do not understand the extent of your calamity. Your routine of study needs some change. Do you love poetry?"

" Oh, yes—but I am not allowed to read it."

With deep toned sweetness, Mr. Hamlin repeated some of Scott's most beautiful lines. With astonishment and delight she listened—pleading for more, until he saw by the enthusiasm and feeling portrayed in each feature, that she had an exquisite appreciation of the harmony of verse, and purity of sentiment. Reciting sweet and elevated passages, he drew from the eyes of Jeanie, tears and sparkling radiance. A new world seemed opened to her in the realms of fancy. At its threshold she stood wondering—for the moment blissful in her faith in one who could charm away her sorrow.

And he, silent to her, mused over the lines :

“ It is not love I feel, it is pure kindness.
How shall I find another like my last?
The golden and the gorgeous loveliness.
A sunset beauty! Ah, I saw it set!
My heart, alas, set with it! I have drained
Life of all love, as doth an iron rod
The heavens of lightning; I have done with it,
And all its waking woes, and dreamed of joys.” }
}

It was a shade of melancholy flitting over his spirit, as a pale moonbeam over the sea. Recovering himself, he thought of the little girl, whose sorrow for the situation of her parents, had awakened his pity, and aroused his determination to soothe and cheer her. The growing resemblance to her beautiful mother, at once magnetized and repelled him, and but for her childhood and innocence, he would have avoided her. But as the mysterious murmurings of his voice, almost hushed with the jar and noise of machinery, awakened gleams of spiritual beauty in the sweet little face, and nearer to him drew the childish confiding listener, his heart went out towards her. He would become her literary guide and teacher, and on the base of her practical education, engrafft the graces of belle lettrre scholarship; he would awaken her being to its full capacity, and by enlarging its attributes, give scope to the range of thought, now panting in its prison-house to be free. By the inspiration of his teachings, he would, as with an artist’s pencil, show her all that was brilliant and sweet in nature, until on her fancy, it burned a glowing landscape; while on her mind, he would fix sublime and sacred truths, studding as with stars, a surface so pure and stainless.

Furthermore, he would teach her to reason, until she was able to solve questions perplexing to the untaught, undeveloped mind, and she should find with him rich intellectual communion.

Thus Philip Hamlin dreamed, as he poured light and sunshine on the tear-bedewed bud, that he would transplant into a richer garden of culture. Meantime, the brief hours whiled away, until at length he had reached the home of his charge, to which he conducted her with her bird (Keturah following) while she promised to read with her aunt's permission, some volumes which he left with her.

Mr. Hamlin was rewarded for his trouble, in witnessing the change his attentions and conversation had wrought, and when he left the little girl at the door of the farm-house, she seemed to have been tasting fruit in some fairy bower ; and not until the form of her protector passed from her sight, did she realize that he was the first person who had ever given her permission to lose the presence of things actual, in the inspiration of the beautiful ideal. The following week, Mr. Hamlin's business required him to journey South.

CHAPTER XVIII.

MRS. MILLER'S rooms, which had been full, were now nearly deserted. Some of the guests lingered at their wine, and a few remained in the parlors.

The apartments in which her visitors had assembled, were less luxurious than those more private, but their beautiful simplicity compensated for the loss of magnificence.

Space and airiness at first mostly impressed one, so lofty and extensive were the broad halls of festivity, but a closer scrutiny revealed taste in their adorning, which manifested a nice sense of the beautiful, and a love for the arts.

Statuary grouped, mingled their classic forms midst couches of downy luxury, seeming to breathe, so illusive and dreamy, was the light, that fell upon them, coming through rosy drapery, as the crimson of a sunset sky falls upon crusted snow. The fragrance of violets scented the air, as in clusters they lay about the rooms, fresh from southern bowers.

Between the light tasteful pillars (twined since Christmas with fresh myrtle and holly) stood the Graces sculptured by the hand of immortal genius. Around the walls hung drapery of lace looped with ornaments resembling pearls. Parting, it showed, as if in vista, a sky of blue, through which, at evening, glowed by artificial radiance, light as if of stars. The effect was novel and magical. In an alcove flowers exhaled their balmy breath, and further onward in an aviary, birds of tropical climes winged in brilliant

plumage. Golden harps and lyres of Eolian sweetness, courted melody from every passing breeze, and the touch of fairy fingers. Paintings hung about in recesses, and conspicuous among them, robed in Grecian costume, was visible one representing the mistress of an abode epicurean as its owner.

The evening was far spent, and yet Mr. Hamlin lingered. Mrs. Miller was bewildered, asking herself his motive. The lady was flattered. She resolved to be gracious—of late she had ceased to be so—yet not considering that she wasted her pearls on an “oyster,” as Mr. Lawrence called the man he was not sharp enough to open. She deemed that now, if ever, she could conquer his inaccessibility.

Those of her guests not yet gone, were engaged with cards, and under the excitement of their wagers. She had never appeared more lovely; the consciousness aided her self-possession in addressing one hitherto reserved and cold.

To a man of world experience, Elinor Miller, at the age of thirty, was more personally attractive than in her girlhood. Not that her cheek showed so pure an oval, or that her crimson lip was so ripe as then, or the outline of her features so softly exquisite, but that which she had lost in youthfulness, she had gained in expression and action. The eloquence of feeling and intellect added intensity to the radiance of a face, taught in every glance to betray emotion—in every tuneful word, to breathe deep music. She now concentrated the power of her attractions, and with the artillery of her varied accomplishments subjugated her admirers—they dazzled by the lustre of features sparkling with genius, won by the affectionate earnestness of manner, sometimes childlike in its fervor, while addressing such as she deemed it worth her pains to please. There were times, when stirred with inspiration

awakened by some object of art, she would seem the ideal of the transcendentalist, so spiritual and lofty was the enthusiasm of her countenance. Then as a sky changes its hues, she would flash with meteoric light, profusely throwing around her the diamonds of her intellect, until those who worshipped, yielded her the palm of superiority. But better it was for him who listened, for him who basked in her noontide splendor, that she chose no softer, gentler mood. As well might the traveller beneath a Syrian sky, resist its glowing influence—its fervid heats, the poppy breath of the Mandragora, or turn aside from an El Dorado of sweet blooming flowers, though surfeited with their rich perfume, as for the unfortified to resist the blandishments of this fair enslaver.

In her style of dress at home, Mrs. Miller was governed by no arbitrary rules, though as a devotee to fashion she appeared abroad, and as caprice ruled her, would assume any garb she deemed becoming; sometimes choosing the costume of foreign lands, and often displaying the beauty of her form in that of the ancient Greek, with which its style comported.

She had chosen to-night a tunic of brilliant crimson, looped low on the shoulders with diamond clasps. Beneath, a white silk robe fell—wrought with gold. The edge of the garment, was bordered with glittering fringe. On her neck and bosom jewels gleamed, a wreath of oak leaves with golden acorns, resting upon her forehead.

On her countenance shone the consciousness of intellectual power, subdued into softness. She would not rival one she wished to conquer. The rays emitted from the star-studded vista, was the only light shed through the rooms. Approaching Mr. Hamlin, she sat down near him.

As he looked at her he thought of the Orient and its

Would a million inferior suns compensate for the orb of fire, set by the living God?"

"I perhaps understand you," said Mrs. Miller, putting back from her temples her glittering wreath, while hope kindled her cheek; "and I can only say in reply, that there are beings whose sympathy compensates for such toil, but if not on earth do we meet this kindred spirit, we must pass a weary pilgrimage in seeking it, despising not the rubbish, lest we miss the golden ore."

"Would it not be an aim more worthy to keep the gold you win, instead of maintaining a fruitless search?"

"Ah, you strike a chord that responds like music to my heart! You will no longer call my ambition ignoble, when I crave, as its reward (the star-lighted form trembled like the low sweet voice) your friendship. Would it not be cooler in the garden? The night is warm."

The lady rose, throwing over her shoulders a mantle, and with her companion, passed through an alcove, and down a flight of steps, into the garlanded court.

Here Flora seemed to be holding a festal fête. The moon shone down in full brilliancy upon a galaxy of beauties now expanding their charms in this garden boudoir, and truly aristocratic was the company assembled.

There were few plebeian guests, though here and there a republican was seen among the rose nobility, bearing the names of "Henry Clay," and "Lady Washington." The "Queen of the Bourbons," with her waxy, blushing face, seemed smiling in her loveliness upon "George the Fourth," who in velvet crimson robes masqueraded, while by his side the "Princess of the House of Luxembourg," and the pride of the "Malmaison" court, coquetted with "Prince Albert," and the "Duke of Orleans." The "Violet Episcopal" exhibited no sectarian preferences, but bloomed in "close communion" with the yellow-decked "Roman," while "Duch-

esses" and "Countesses" reared more proudly their brilliant crests, at the close proximity of "La belle Africaine," with "Sablée" in her train.

In this southern bower of fragrance from every court of Europe, from past generations, the floral beauties seemed to have come, each bearing the titles of their ancestors. The knights of the "Cloth of Gold" stood conspicuous in the pageant. Gorgeous in their perfumed folds of buff and sapphire, they tower aloft, showering around them their heaven-dyed gems. As sentinels or slaves in oriental attire, the "Lion of the Combats," and the "Giant of the Battles," arrayed in brilliant crimson, follow *en suite*.

Beautiful as a dream was this garden of fragrance, and to one from a more northern clime, magical in its prodigal luxury of blooms, and in the height and breadth of its wide-spreading verdure.

Beneath the glossy leaves of the lofty magnolia, and the beautiful bay-tree, not yet in flower, Mr. Hamlin walked with Mrs. Miller, in a path bordering the rose-garden.

"Do I understand," said the lady, "that we are henceforth friends?"

"Mrs. Miller, what right have you to ask my friendship? —a woman both foolish and insane. I visit you for another purpose than gallantry, and I trust, a righteous one."

"Why do you torture with your presence one you despise? You both agitate and oppress me. You do not know what it is to barter all the wealth of one's nature for gold; to see day and night the glare of the cold bright metal, and nothing else. Oh! how I wish my heart were stone, or I were a girl again, that I might offer it to him I loved."

Pale with excited feeling, Elinor Miller continued:

"It may cause you satisfaction that you have humbled me, for I have craved your friendship, but instead, I have but your scorn. Again, I ask, why do you visit me?"

" Hoping that I may induce you to become worthy of your husband. But why should I be your mentor ? I do not assume that right. Still I would return good for evil."

" What evil have I done you ? Will you madden me to put an end to my miserable existence ?"

" Will you be a fool as well as wicked ? Is there not another life ? Miserable woman ! Have you no thought beyond the gratification of your vanity ?"

" Why do you care what becomes of me ?"

" You have a husband and a child. She you profess to love, looks to you as a star on her memory—the star of her future hopes."

" The more reason that I should wish to die." Bursting into tears, the speaker hid her face in her hands. " Am I not a victim of tyranny ?"

" No, pardon me, rather of your own folly. You suffer, but for you there is the purest consolation. You have wasted your best years in the pursuit of a phantom ; and by it fevered your imagination, and palsied your noblest impulses ; but, thank God, for the honor of your husband, you have not thrown yourself entirely away. Bereft of your weak ambition, your pride and vanity, you are yet capable of all that is generous and good. For your earthly happiness, I would bid you seek the forgiveness of him you have wronged. I would have you see him, not as you are now, in the garb of a Hour, but adorned with a robe of simplicity, and with an humble spirit."

" You care not how you torture me !"

" How can I render you less unhappy ?" Mr. Hamlin spoke half in bitterness, half in a tone of derision.

" You," said the frantic woman, as he removed from her, folding his arms ; " no ! you prefer to crush my heart, as you have humbled my pride."

"Elinor Miller, forget not there is one to whom you owe your first allegiance—he whom you have driven from you, by your reckless course. I know the mind of Archibald Miller as I do my own. And I know that though he had the 'heart of a lion,' it would melt beneath a woman's sorrowful contrition; but his Godlike integrity demands of you a life corresponding with his principles. Did I not know you to be too proud to be vicious, I would not degrade him by endeavoring to unite you to him. Shall I make clear the way for your happiness, and that of your lovely child?"

"I would sooner seek retaliation upon one who had thus humiliated me. Is not my child taught to despise me, and will she not be torn from me eventually?"

"I am commissioned to bring her to you next winter. She is a sweet flower, too pure for scenes of revelry; and like these buds around us, needs dew as well as sunshine. She yearns for a mother's tender love. Oh! let her also enjoy unbroken confidence in one whom she reveres."

"For him and her you have then only sought me?"

"To me you are naught but as the wife of my friend, and the parent of a child for whom I feel much tenderness. But I will say this, that were you mine, you should either be transported to desert wilds, or be subject to your husband in honor and obedience. I cannot say that in this I should not be a tyrant."

"You would not have cast me off—say this! say this!"

"I say nothing, but that for him to whom you pledged your maiden vows, I would have you live worthily, and regain the love you lost by your own folly. You thought yourself his superior, and you tortured him to the mad act of parting from you. But, believe me, superior though you may be in the gifts of genius, heaven's blue dome is not higher above the earth, than the aspirations of this despised man above your own. Has not his whole life been spent in

God's service ? in a life of usefulness to his fellow-creatures ? Has he not, like the Saviour of mankind, sought the poor and lowly, while his charity, like a mantle, has spread over all, even sparing his wife the condemnation she has received from a world that judges not mercifully."

"Has it censured me?"

"It has. You are better than you would seem, though that is but little in your favor."

"Mr. Hamlin," Mrs. Miller's face flashed anger, "I have borne from you insult, and scorn, until my brain has maddened. You might have raised my ambition, but you will drive me to ruin or death."

Mr. Hamlin curled his stern lip, while he bent his dark eyes upon her whom he addressed :

"Am I the man, think you, to be beguiled by a woman's art ? I am no boy, neither can I forget to respect myself, or the honor of my friend."

With these words Mr. Hamlin ascended the steps leading to the alcove, when he parted with his hostess.

Mrs. Miller heard the next day that he had left for the North. Mr. Lawrence had called early, bringing the news. He was shocked to find his "charming friend" indisposed. He thought she needed air and exercise, and would call round and give her a drive.

"Would she take the shell road ?" The inquiry was sent her.

Mr. Lawrence called at six. Mrs. Miller was "not at home." It was some consolation that his buggy had been seen at her door. Mr. Lawrence was proud of his acquaintance with Mrs. Miller, and talked "about town" of the way she "bored" him. There was no man for whom he felt such unqualified contempt as Mr. Hamlin. He considered, and pronounced him, a "Goth."

CHAPTER XIX.

IN a village adjoining Meadow Brook, known as Mad River, from a little stream supposed to be insane, though useful for mills and other rational purposes, there may be seen on the declivity of a hill, an humble dwelling called a parsonage. Its owner and occupant was a widow by the name of Middleton. She had been the wife of the former clergyman of the parish, and was thoroughly puritanical in her prejudices and opinions ; without that enlargement of her views, which an acquaintance with the world often creates even in a mind contracted both by education and nature. Her life had been a totally secluded one, in the small village, of which she was (unconscious to its inhabitants) the female ruler, and disciplinarian.

It was enough to settle any dispute agitated, that she had formed a decision upon it—and she considered all who differed from her, as presuming and arrogant. Her dogmatism, assumption, and bigotry, being, however, accompanied by all outward manifestations of orthodoxy, and the forms of religion, she was deemed by the humble villagers as their superior, while they overlooked her illiberality and uncharitableness in her pretended zeal for their good, and her never failing attendance (especially in inclement weather) upon all pastoral ordinances.

Under the hill she had been born, and still lived (though she seemed always climbing that of Difficulty), her father having bestowed it upon her at the time of her marriage ;

he still continuing his school in the rear of it, where for the period of thirty years, he had taught, cuffed, and whipped the boys of the village—both being objects of terror and respect, the one from his faithful application of the birch, and the other from the exercise of a not less smarting rod of discipline, her tongue.

That Mrs. Middleton was the female dictator, and general superintendent of affairs temporal and spiritual, no one pretended to dispute, much less the little modest bride of the young clergyman, lately installed, to whom she was both mentor and Pope.

Mr. Middleton, the former pastor, had been a meek, subdued looking invalid, for ten years previous to his death, finally expiring, while his wife was travelling through massive snow-drifts, to "deal" with an erring sister, who had absented herself from church for some unknown cause.

Mrs. Middleton endeavored to educate her children after her own moral and religious standard, in which charity was left out, and justice established as the crowning virtue ; while she opposed with iron will, all innovations on old customs and forms, especially in church matters.

Mr. Slocum had for forty years set the tune in the choir, and with his forefinger layed it down—the rise and fall of his body, the uplifting of his scalp, and the descending of his lower jaw, keeping time with the nasal twang of his fa-so-la—which Mrs. Middleton thought, ought to be a sufficient signal to the Mad Riverites to "strike in," without any of "Satan's devices :" consequently, the presuming young man, who had suggested an organ, was dismissed from the church for various venial offences, complained of by the dictator.

It had certainly been trial enough, that she had been compelled to sit under a dripping stove-pipe, instead of thumping her feet together, as the old settlers did with

godly zeal, to obtain warmth, beside that of sitting in a "slip," instead of a square pew, where she had been able see all the children, and how they behaved, and which was most likely to lose his acute angle of pie (her Sunday dinner) for not remembering the text—but these were minor afflictions to her constant dread of an organ.

As may well be imagined, Mrs. Middleton was strong in her prejudices, and opposed to all luxuries and superfluities, believing that in the "strait and narrow path" no flowers grew, and that all a Christian needed, was thorns. It might have been slander, but it had been surmised, that she proved "one in the flesh" to her patient husband.

It was a trial to her that her daughter possessed the "weakness" of her deceased husband; that of a meek disposition, and a sensitive spirit. Consequently Mrs. Middleton resolved to educate her child in a manner calculated, as she believed, to counteract this inherent evil, and by "thorough discipline" expel from her mind also her lax notions of liberality towards her fellow creatures.

She had moulded the Mad Riverites, and felt conscious that the further one travelled from the pale of a fold so righteous, the more corrupt were their associations. Therefore the lovely Mary Middleton was placed under the tuition of her grandfather, the venerable pedagogue of the birch rule, who in his old age, had become cross and irritable; and given up boys, from physical inability to master them; in lieu, exercising his despotism over the gentler sex.

Although perfect in her lessons, Mary found it no easy task to please her instructor, and finding that her complaints received no audience at home, she submitted hopelessly to the tyranny exercised over her, while trusting that marriage or a revolution of some sort would one day afford her a refuge.

Her mother determined that she should be well drilled in

the dead languages (especially in Hebrew), to the exclusion of all other studies, and to resolutely instill into her mind an antipathy to all literature, save such as she had herself read (which knowledge Mary had little means of attaining), and above all to inspire her with an abhorrence of the tongue of that "dreadful nation," the French.

Of New Orleans she had heard, and like one of the "cities of the plain," believed it doomed to be overwhelmed some day either with fire or water.

Arthur had accidentally met Mary Middleton, and was charmed with her simplicity. Hearing of her cloistered life, and the stern dominion under which she was bred and educated, he was strongly excited to advance the acquaintance—an introduction he had the prudence to make through his grandfather the deacon.

Still Mrs. Middleton eyed the young man with suspicion, in consequence of his connection with a step-mother of such notoriety, who was now actually living in this southern Gomorrah.

That Mr. Miller had separated from his wife, was some palliation of Arthur's sin in being so related, and under the impression and belief that he, like herself, saw the justice of her being swallowed alive with her child, when the destruction of the city should take place, she was reconciled that he should in consequence of the deacon's introduction, visit her daughter.

After four years drilling and abuse from the old schoolmaster, Mary Middleton was brought out by her mamma, as a pattern abroad; and at home a source of mortification and trial, requiring severe censure and daily reprimanding, for being still so unlike her maternal relative. And verily she seemed her antipode, being loving, gentle, and womanly in feeling, with such amiable sweetness of character and demeanor, as endeared her to all who knew her.

The severity of her education, and the gloom of a home made unpleasant from its never ceasing doctrinal disputations between the elder branches ; and such enforcement of arbitrary rules among the younger, as caused disobedience, continued revolt, and consequent punishment ; all conducing to make the more sweet and precious such hours as she had been finally (after much conference between her elders), permitted to pass with her accepted lover.

Winter had now succeeded to autumn : the scarlet and golden leaves no longer made gay the brilliant forests, or fluttered in gorgeous beauty from the boughs they had seemingly wreathed with living flames ; even the poplars were bare, on the banks of the now frozen streams, and the lofty pine and hemlock alone stood green on the denuded and desolate landscape. The top of old Greylock was crested with snow, and in the distance, the Catskill mountains piled up like gigantic towers of crystal.

It was a dreary scene to the lonely girl, who found so little warmth and sunny brightness within ; but her household tasks being performed, and the younger children put to bed, which duty devolved upon Mary, she sat down by the window of the keeping room, where her grandfather napped and snored in his arm chair, occasionally starting and raising his cane, as if dreaming of the schoolroom, and the offence of some juvenile. She had brightened the fire on the hearth, and prepared the old man's night-potations ; and went forth to meet Arthur, who was coming to see her.

Her mind had been during the day frequently agitated by conversations overheard, relative to her engagement.

She dared not pass her grandparent, lest she might arouse him, and thus be detained through his ill-humor. Throwing a light shawl about her shoulders, she slid cautiously out of the room, carefully lifting the latch, and thence out of the wicket-gate, now iced with frost.

She had seen the approach of her young suitor, and bounded lightly over the snow path, her footsteps leaving no impression upon the hard crusted banks.

Wrapped in winter apparel, scarcely seeing out of the furred cap drawn down over his ears, Arthur Miller could hardly believe in the fairness of his vision, when he saw in the distance the delicate girl, so lightly clad.

The lane was a long, lonely one, that led to the secluded cottage ; and as she came with fleet movements towards him, her head sometimes veiled in her shawl, then bared to the cold north wind, he was not long deceived, but hastened rapidly towards her. With alarm, he wrapped his cloak around her, exclaiming :

“ Mary, what has driven you forth in the cold ? Imprudent girl, how you shiver !”

With trembling fondness, Mary Middleton clung to his arm, while she breathed hurriedly :

“ Arthur, I am not cold now. Hold my hands tighter—they ache ; but my heart is warmer. It is but a luxury to have you scold me, and to know that your chidings are the harshest that I shall ever hear. Dear Arthur—don’t let us go back. I am warm now. I sometimes think it would be better to be for ever cold, than to suffer as I do at home.”

“ My dear Mary—you grieve me—are you so sad ? would that I could take you to-night under my protection. There is warmth enough I believe in my heart, for you. How pale you are looking !”

The features of Mary Middleton were delicate and fair, like her father’s, whose constitution she inherited ; and the slightest agitation produced a sensible alteration in her appearance. She was fragile in person, with a countenance full of winning loveliness, without extraordinary beauty ; and attracted both from her engaging manner, and a certain

air of sadness that arose from her situation, known to be one demanding sympathy.

“Arthur, if I return, I cannot come out with you ; and I would not lose moments I value so much. I do not mind that grandfather is cross ; but neither he nor mother will allow me to see you alone ; and I want to tell you, that you must come some night, and steal me away, for else it may be, that I can never be yours.”

“Mary ! Mary ! my sweet girl, be more composed, what has happened ? Do I not live on the anticipation of the time when I can provide you a home of happiness ? I mean to take you to Castlemont, as soon as the early birds come, and there you will be the blithest. There my mother lived, Mary ; I often fancy that you are like her as she was when a girl. Cannot you trust me ? or do you fear that I shall prove a renegade ?”

“No, Arthur, I do not doubt you ; but would you not like to know your destiny ? Oh ! how beautiful the future is to me, how like the gate of heaven its portal seems, when with you I shall live in a world of freedom, without fetters that daily grow more galling ! Oh ! pray for me, that I may not hate true religion, in view of its hollow mockeries. It is strange that you should love me.”

“That I should love the dearest girl on earth, save one ?”

“Save one !” said Mary, turning paler, “is there another that you divide your heart with ?”

“Yes, a dear sister.”

“Do not speak of her !”

“Not of my little Jeanie !”

“Let us not talk of her.”

Arthur thought of the absent, weeping for a mother’s home, and how miserable one still dearer was made, by the unsatisfied longings, its dearth of sweetness had produced.

"Jeanie is a creature of cheerful trusting faith ; Mary, learn to look with unwavering hope to brighter days, while you rely on a hand mightier than one of earth, to bring you to a happy home. Did I not firmly believe, that ere two months shall have passed, I shall marry you, I could not leave you to doubt, and grow jealous of my love. Then you cannot spare a corner of my heart for Jeanie ?"

Again the slight form shuddered, while she clung to the arm of her lover. Her only reply was : "Take me to-night, or, I can never—never be yours."

"Mary, do you know to what you tempt me ? Could I be dishonorable to one who has given me so precious a boon ? Could I be treacherous to your mother ?"

"Take me before I am taught to despise, as they do, your little sister. How they hate her, and her dreadful mother and grandmother ! Arthur, don't love her so much, she is but your half-sister, and is going to her wicked parent, whom I can never see : tell me that you do not love her—tell mine and grandpa that you despise her like your step-mother, and then they will not take me from you—otherwise my heart will break."

"Mary, is it because you wish to leave your home, or that you love me, that you talk so insanely ?"

"Oh, both. You must give up Jeanie, or me. I heard them talking, and they have learned that you correspond with your sister, and of all the dreadful things she did when she first came to the farm ; and how she cries to go back to her awful mother. Arthur, how I wish you had not this little sister !"

The wanderers had now reached home, to which Arthur insisted upon returning, to re-wrap his charge. Bursting into tears, the half frantic girl cried : "Promise me, if they ask you about Jeanie, that you will say you do not care for her—and will give her up as you have her family ; and

then," the fond girl now trembled, clinging closer, "I am yours never more to part."

"Mary, can you ask me this? Can you bid me speak falsely, and disown my pure, my angel sister? No, Mary, not even for you can I do this. I would sooner resign my life."

They had now reached the house, when the lovers entered, with agitation, the presence of Mrs. Middleton and the old schoolmaster, Josiah Skinner.

"I am afraid, Miss," said the former, "that you have not listened much to the edification of your soul to-night, under present circumstances. But as things are coming to an end between you, it would be well—don't you think so, father, to settle these young people's minds?"

"It might be well to know the principles of this young man, before he carries a child of yours from the path of godliness, among his unprincipled connections. The girl had better go to bed."

"No, father—let her stay, it would be better for her to know and feel the horror that we both have of a marriage that will bring her into contact with vice. Arthur Miller you have deceived me, and by the wiles of Satan, led me to believe that your step-mother's infamous progeny was but a part and parcel of her vile self; and now from good authority—Betsey Washburn don't lie—I hear that you write to, and visit this child of the devil, and that she is going on to that dreadful Sodom after her. No, young man, my girl, bad as she is, has been brought up by one who never flinched in the path of religious duty; and has been educated by one who, like myself, would see her drop dead, before he would ally her to sin and iniquity."

"Do you dare to traduce my sister?" said Arthur Miller, his eyes flashing.

"Wouldn't I cudgel you for that, you stripling—if—if I

could get my cane ?" The old man attempted to reach his staff, but fell backwards in his chair.

Arthur now cast his eyes upon the terrified girl, who gave him (her hands clasped), a look of beseeching eloquence.

The mother saw the appeal, and confronted her, saying :

" Mary, we do not wish to take the refusal of this young man altogether on ourselves. You know that we have both had a talk with you."

" Yes, remember that, young woman."

" And," continued Mrs. Middleton, " it is your place now to express your mind. Do you wish to marry this young man, in view of such an association as his depraved sister, or will you discard him, and live as you have done, in the paths of righteousness, under the guidance of your elders and superiors."

" Speak, young woman." The pedagogue gave Mary a poke with his stick, which he had finally reached.

No words proceeded from the white lips of Mary.

Arthur awaited a reply, but observing her silence, came and stood before her :

" Mary," said he with an effort, " answer and fear not—speak truly as before God. Will you marry me, taking my beloved sister to your heart as your own—cleaving unto her until death shall separate you—or do you here, in the presence of your mother and grandfather, voluntarily discard me for my love and faith to her ? Fear not Mary—be courageous—you may suffer for a time, but God will deliver you in so just a cause. Without compulsion do you give me up ?"

The eyes of her tyrannical protectors were fastened upon hers, while eagerly they awaited her reply.

" Yes."

Like one pronouncing her own doom, the answering word

came from the lips of the fainting girl, who was carried by her mother in a swoon from the room.

Arthur Miller returned that night to the farm. How little the glad child who met him with outstretched arms, knew of the sacrifice she had cost him, or how deep was the grief of the hearts she had so innocently torn asunder.

“Oh, Jeanie!” the lover murmured in the night’s dark watches: “even in thy childhood, wouldest thou have denied the truth through fear, even though that fear was dreadful as thine, Mary?”

Had Mary Middleton dared to confess the love, that could for him have braved all ills—have boldly clung to him defending those he loved, Arthur Miller would have razed the walls wherein she slept, to have torn her from oppression; but the trembler, in her weakness, was but human, and better than he, knew the wrath that would fall upon her defenceless head, with such a declaration.

Arthur forgave and pitied her he still loved too tenderly, but he could not forget that she had lacked the moral courage to speak the truth.

In her terror she had yielded to the dominion that from childhood she had never dared dispute; and no one but the all-seeing Eye, knew how full of tenderness for her young lover, was the heart which the utterance of the cruel falsehood broke.

CHAPTER XX.

THE year succeeding Jeanie's visit to New York, had been one of new heart experience. She had returned to the farm with her faith shaken in her father, and as yet resting upon no sure anchor of hope. She performed her accustomed duties, but took longer rambles abroad, and rarely sought company as formerly. She seemed almost to forget the book of nature in the new pages of thought revealed to her mind. As her confidence in her father waned, so faded her trust in all in whom she had hitherto confided, excepting old Grandpa Selden. He constituted her favorite society, and by his side she would often sit for hours, reading to him the Bible, while he called her, as he did when she first came to the farm, his "lamb." She wrote and received letters from her friends, and saved her pocket allowance and enclosed it to Mr. Hamlin, for "poor Grandma Castleman." She read and re-read the books of poetry the former gave her, and expressed her admiration for many beautiful passages to him with enthusiastic fervor. Her language became more soulful and expressive; her eye deeper in its beautiful depths. She fast grew into womanly proportions; and from a wild, eager child, with quick, active motions, changed to a being of gentle fascination.

With the first warble of the birds she was abroad, generally following the brook, where amidst the rustle and murmur of leafy and humming things, she would write, read, or muse. She learned to ride upon horseback, and on a Shet-

land sent her by Arthur, would go off for miles, refusing an escort.

The change, although such as her aunt had craved, half alarmed her. She feared the effects of so much absorbing thought upon Jeanie, but since the letter she had received from Mr. Miller respecting the divorce, she could not again revive the entire confidence of her pupil. Though more kind and affectionate than of old, the child was still reserved ; and if her father was mentioned, would seek some excuse to flee from her presence.

She gathered and loved flowers, but soon threw them away ; and sometimes would stop and look at them, as they lay trampled, as if, like all else in life, they had dissatisfied her. She loved to muse by moonlight, and when permitted, would sit up until a late hour. With shuddering fear she trembled, lest she should begin to doubt the reality of the Almighty presence, and that her faith in divine promises, which like a tremulous star had gleamed in the firmament of her young mind, would become veiled in darkness. With convictions of her sinfulness, and her want of submission to her destiny, and above all to her heart's loneliness, which treasured, as she now believed, no worthy object of love, she would clasp her hands, beseeching for strength to bear, and for light to illumine her path.

Although surrounded by hearts mostly faithful to her, she lived alone. Her fervid imaginings were made more vivid by the poetry which she read, until her fancy was one garden of flowers ; all of which now seemed poisoned and blighted. Like everything else, her books finally ceased to please, and with distorted views of human nature, and dark dreams of a future, the ripening Jeanie sank despondingly beneath the clouds of disappointment that brooded over her.

Jane Selden had watched with fearful interest the change in her pupil, and knew that it remained with herself to gain

the victory over the evil warring in her nature ; for such she deemed the indulgence of selfish and silent murmurings against the decrees of Providence.

“ Jeanie,” said she, as the now pensive girl sat holding her bird, moodily contemplating some work which she had given her to do ; “ do you know that you are in a state of wicked rebellion towards your Maker, for the trials He has given you to bear meekly ? Do you think in your weakness to contend with His majesty, and turn aside His providences ? ‘ Knowest thou the ordinances of heaven ? Canst thou set the dominion thereof in the earth ? ’ You sit for hours looking at the stars, but ‘ Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion ? ’ ”

“ Will He, so mighty, think of me, and take away this load ? ” Jeanie hid her pale face. “ I have not thought that I was doing wrong, but of the injustice and sins of others.”

“ Is there no need of cleansing and purifying our own hearts, but that we should seek to purge those of others ? Jeanie, could we at this moment control our destinies, choose our own homes, our own friends, and mould them to our liking, should we not hesitate where to go, and how to commence this mighty reformation ? Can you not, with the light of the soul, trust as well as the ‘ ostrich who leaveth her eggs in the earth, and warmeth them in the dust, and forgetteth that the foot may crush them, or that the wild beast may break them ? ’ ”

With sorrowful tears, the young girl wept and prayed.

Slowly, but surely, despair, with all the leaden doubts that had darkened and made heavy her spirit, like the mists of morning faded from her sky, while on her horizon stood the beacon light of faith, a bright and shining tower. Over and around her gleamed a heaven-encircling rainbow, telling of hope sure and steadfast.

At the foot of the Cross she laid her burden down, and in the Everlasting arms sought for strength to live, for grace to bear and suffer, and in her Master's service to live and die.

Mr. Hamlin's warbler had been to Jeanie, through her period of gloom, her sole comforter. She nestled, and cherished it in her bosom, feeding it from her lips, until it flew to her, as she said, "as if she was home and heart to little Pico."

If it possessed enhanced value to her as the gift of Mr. Hamlin, she did not speak of it; but would often ask Keturah, if she did not think that he would find his pet looking prettier when he saw him again.

After caressing him one day, and placing him in his cage, she stood watching with tender interest, his fluttering efforts to return to her, which excited the derision of Zebedee, and drew forth threats, that some day he would "wring the neck of the little noisy squab."

Not long after, missing the early song of her favorite, she flew to the window where she had placed his cage, and discovered that it lay upon the ground below; and beside it, little Pico stretched dead. For a time, she was wild with grief; her efforts to restore life to the bird, exciting deeply the pity of the household, save the bachelor, who spared his condolences, and was that day among the missing.

She did not think Pico's enemy would purposely drop him, but could not forget that he had hated his music and threatened his life. Nor until after the death of the bird, was she aware how tenderly she had associated him with his donor, nor how deeply she sympathized with him, in a loss, she fancied that he would feel like herself.

"Dear little Pico is dead!" she began her letter to him. "I know that this will be to you sad news; for you had doubtless begun to love him when you gave him to me. The house seems as if it had

lost some bright angel spirit ; he was so lovely and sweet in all his moods, and they changed as often as his bird-notes. I perhaps loved him better than he came to me when I was very sad, and that like myself, he seemed to crave sympathy and a mother's home. But he will not come on his golden wings at my call, any more : nor sing to me, as if his pretty throat would burst with his gleeful music, for poor little Pico is dead and buried. I hope you will not feel sad, if you do, I shall mourn the more. I cannot forget that you gave him to me to comfort me. No other will ever take his place—your and my birdie. I know not the cause of his death, but presume it was an accident. But as we cannot bring him back, I will write of other things. I am not miserable now as I was, for I know that there is a bright and a dark side to every landscape ; and that it is as wicked not to enjoy the sunshine, as not to be resigned to the shadows. I have learned to love poetry, and now that I have read it in verse, I feel that I have enjoyed it before, though it was unwritten ; and that my dreamings have been of the same nature ; and when I have wandered alone, it has been poetry that has often made the sky seem so 'blue, and the flowers and trees so beautiful, because others who have been with me, have only seen cold dull things. I have found rich enjoyment in the books you gave me, and have often wished I could hear you repeat the sweet words in them. I am glad that I am going South with you—I will be a better listener now. How we shall both miss little Pico !

" JEANIE."

Mr. Hamlin was pleased with the confiding tone of the letter, and not realizing the change which had occurred in her, since they parted, still thought of her as the wild, eager and impulsive child. He wrote her a consoling reply, promising her another bird, and closed with a proposal to take her South in the autumn.

With the change in Jeanie's religious feelings, she became more cheerful, though her moods were generally of a pensive character. She now loved the worship of her Heavenly Father ; and in the exercise of her sweet and hopeful faith, found serene happiness. The union of her parents, was yet the fond desire of her heart, but she thought of the possi-

bility with less sanguine emotion than formerly ; and more resignedly submitted to the trials, incident upon their separation.

To Aunt Jane, she grew tender and devoted, endeavoring to soothe her for the pain she had caused, in her period of alienation from her ; and so wound herself about the hearts of the old people, that they were miserable if she was out of their presence. Keturah worshipped her, and even Zebedee, after being so *careless* with her bird, brought her home a brook-crab in a bottle, which being the first and only act of generosity towards her known of, was returned with a smile, Keturah said, that was good enough for a "pond of gold-fish, and a plaguy sight too much, for such a dreadful murderer."

Since her fourteenth birth-day, Jeanie's hair had been allowed to grow ; and now, though not long, lay soft and rich about her model head, its hue, dark brown : in the sunlight, it wore its childhood's golden gleams. Her features and complexion grew more like, but not as brilliant as her mother's. She was fairer, more strictly a blonde, her face possessing not the same dazzling character, thus differing from Elinor Castleman at her age. There was not so much majesty, if grace, in her firm, elastic step, and less of command. She won more by her expression, and the sweet tones of her voice, while her unassuming, unpretending demeanor, indicated a disposition curbed, and taught to yield. She was now fully grown, and in the first blush of womanhood. Her laugh had come back, and though less gay than of old, was contagious in its ringing melody. Her countenance changed, with the play of feeling—now flashing with the hue of the rose, as her sense of the ridiculous was touched ; and as suddenly paling with an emotion of pity, or with the awakening of deeper thoughts.

She recalled her father with love, but love divested of its

holy reverence ; and for her mother, her fond ideal, she felt unqualified adoration.

She thought that she could never love any one as much as Arthur, and was enthusiastic in her desire to see his "beautiful Mary." He had never told her of the dissolution of his engagement.

The development of our tale requires a retrograde step in its narration, and the introduction of the reader to the home of Mr. Hamlin, or to the family of one who occupies a conspicuous position in its pages.

Mrs. Larkfield, his mother, had married some ten years after the death of her first husband, the child of which connection was an idolized son, who bore the name of Ralph.

It will perhaps occasion surprise, that one so little known in his domestic relations as Philip Hamlin, should have been a devoted son, and a faithful affectionate brother and guardian, to this boy of his parent's second marriage.

Like himself, Ralph had been left fatherless at an early age, and being handsome and talented, became the darling and pride of his mother, and to his elder brother from his reckless habits, as much an object of painful solicitude. Since a child, he had watched over him with almost parental care, educating him in a manner suiting the ambition of his fond, proud mother. To Philip, she had been comparatively indifferent, and loved him chiefly as a source of benefit and luxury to her darling and youngest child.

At the period of our story, Ralph Larkfield, in his nineteenth year, had already involved Philip Hamlin in an accumulation of trouble. Though not naturally vicious, yet heedless of consequences, he rushed precipitately, and with headlong rashness, into scenes of dissipation, where he

became a prey to the snares of accomplished intriguers, and the victim of his own folly and imprudence.

Money wasted like water in his hands, and notwithstanding the rigid principle of his brother, who denied him means for wasteful expenditure, he would still manage by strategem to incur heavy debts, thereby occasioning Philip constant trouble to afford him relief.

While these demands were not ruinous to his income, for the sake of his mother, and that she might be kept in ignorance of the course of her son, Philip met them unmurmuringly, but the period came when in addition to extravagance and the dissipation of boyhood, were added the debts of the profligate and gambler.

Still by personal sacrifices, Philip Hamlin continued to pay sums for horses, wines, and such luxuries as the habits of his brother involved, until, finally, heavier calls were made, to save him from public exposure.

• The case required a larger amount to compromise its claims, than Mr. Hamlin could conveniently command, and in his extremity he applied to Mr. Miller.

With characteristic benevolence, the latter aided the youth, but with such severity of censure, that Ralph fully realized he had experienced all the help he would ever render him under like circumstances. The magnanimity of the act, and the essential service rendered his brother, was an obligation that lay heavy at the heart of his friend. He felt that no sum could ever cancel the debt—no return ever repay the kindness extended his family, for by it they had been saved a son's dishonored name, at an age when condemnation might have completed his ruin.

Rash, erring, and faulty, as Ralph Larkfield had become, he was what the world calls generous and noble. His bearing was affectionate, even fascinating. Like many others of the same stamp, he had, after a childhood of

indulgence, and freedom from restraint, been led by evil example, and his own reckless impulses, into vicious habits—determining hourly to abandon his excesses.

To effect the reformation promised, Mr. Miller engaged the services of Ralph in his own employment, offering him rich compensation for the fulfillment of his duties, when the latter left New Orleans, the theatre of his dissipation, and commenced life anew in New York.

Overcome with the generous and efficient service rendered him, at the age of twenty-one Ralph Larkfield entered on his new duties with energy and determination to redeem his character, hoping in time to liquidate the debt for which he was obligated. But it was long before he could conquer his love for pleasure ; and but for his brother, after his installment into his new office, he had lost for ever the confidence of his generous employer.

Complaints were secretly made to Philip, which gave rise to an interview.

Meeting him as usual, Ralph extended his hand, and with his gay fearless manner addressed him : “What now, brother Phil ? are you in any infernal scrape, that you want my assistance ?”

For the first time his hand was refused.

“Ralph ! I have done with you—you may go to ruin from this day, before I will ever appear again as your advocate. But for my influence where would you have been now ? I have indulged, aided, and warned you until I have exhausted my patience, and drained my purse.”

“Philip,” interrupted the young man, throwing the hair from his handsome brow, “by all that’s good I swear—”

“I will hear none of your profanity. I want no oaths to confirm your words—indeed I want no words—give me your acts, or rest assured from this time forth, I will cast you

off, as I would a thankless dog. I am incensed, and Mr. Miller's confidence in you has been outraged. Where is your gratitude, or your love for your mother?"

"I do mean to pay off the old fellow. By the eyes of Araminta—and the keys of St. Peter, I will. Now Brother Phil, don't look as savage as an Arab. I have played my last card, drunk my last bottle of cognac, and bid adieu to my last sweetheart. Expensive delicacies all of them. Think of the bracelets I have given Miss Adelaide Seraphina Sophinisy. But as the Emperor Solomon said: 'all is vanity'; and after this, I am the Hon. Archibald Miller's private and public secretary; and intend to associate with no individual, but my virtuous greyhound, who has not one vicious habit. Come Phil, what's the use playing parson over me? I tell you on the honor of a gentleman—"

"I should like less talk, and more sobriety of manner," said the brother, frowning.

"Philip, you know the family failing. Hasn't our beloved mamma the longest and sweetest tongue in the world? and my elder brother a sharp and two-edged sword, made of Damascus steel?"

"How can you refer to a mother whose voice is so little regarded? If your brother's severe language is unheeded, let hers come over your memory whispering its warnings. As for me—neither in anger or sorrow will I ever again address you by way of reproof."

"Give me your hand, Philip," said Ralph, the tears starting to his eyes. "Take my word once more. You have been more than a thousand brothers to me. Give me your hand."

Philip Hamlin was again moved to compassion. Feeling quivered his lip, and moistened his eyes. He took in his grasp the outstretched palm of the impulsive youth.

"Once more I take your word, against my resolution, and may God strengthen you to keep it."

Ralph Larkfield returned to his business, impressed with the interview with his brother. He had never before seen him so deeply incensed, never when pity and sorrow had not seemed to prevail over his anger. He was for the first time, alarmed. He had believed as firmly in his brother's fidelity, as in that of his mother. He could not forget that he had refused him his hand. For a while, he was desponding, reserved and gloomy. This mood was succeeded by a deportment and bearing indicative of self-respect, and pride of character. He was not so tall as Philip, but possessed more suppleness and grace, with less dignity of presence. Fresh and joyous in manner, his conversations often sparkled with wit, and were replete with illustrative anecdote.

With Mr. Miller, he became a favorite and the partner of Arthur in a successful business. The devotion of the brother to his sister was more evident after the dissolution of his engagement to Mary Middleton.

He wrote to her, begging her to say that she repented of her decision, and not to deceive him on a point of such vital interest to him, but that if, like her mother, she had sincerely desired him to abandon Jeanie, that such a truth, painful as it would be, he wished to know from herself.

He received a prompt reply, written in trembling characters :

"I am permitted to write you, Arthur—but it is only to say again farewell—farewell for ever! I am dying, Arthur, and as I would not be drawn from thoughts of a better world, and should sin perhaps in loving you too much, it is better that we were separated. If your sister were like you, I might have loved her, but I have been taught to believe that she is the type of her mother, beautiful and unprincipled, and will bewitch and lead to destruction those she is with.

Beware of her, dear Arthur, and strive to resist her influence ; I might not have had the strength to, and so it is better that we parted. My life has been a dark one, but heaven will be the brighter for it. They are more kind to me, but sometimes I wish that I could have you put your cloak around me, as you did that cold night, for I am often colder now. It was a sweet passage in my life, when we loved each other. Forgive me that I said what must have seemed to you untrue ; for in view of the dreadful consequences, if I adhered to you, I could not do it. I am too timid, too weak, for your strong, courageous heart, but not the less your loving

“MARY.”

With grief Arthur perused this letter. His first impulse was to fly to the idolized one, and if she was among the living, carry her from those who were, as he believed, killing her with their tyranny and bigoted teachings. Had the days of witchcraft existed, where would have been his darling sister, if the representations of these cold blooded people, had been taken against her ? But should he fail to rescue her, would not her situation be made worse ?

With a heart full of pity and love for the timid, fond girl, whose weakness of resolution was her only fault, he was consoled with the consciousness that he had fulfilled his duty to one to whom, in her days of infancy, he had vowed fidelity. The sacrifice cost him such anguish, as he felt time could not heal, and that the door of his happiness would for ever close, when death sealed the blue eyes of Mary.

CHAPTER XXI.

IT was late in the winter when Jeanie prepared for her journey South, and a sad day to the good people at the farm, who had so long loved her, and watched over her childhood. She awoke with a thrill of joy, while crowding on her fancy came sweet anticipations of a delightful trip, with a termination so blissful. In a few short days she would be clasped to the heart of her beloved mother. She read and re-read her last fond letter, and closed it, kissing it as a sacred thing. Then went up from her heart a prayer for the guardianship of her Heavenly Father, and a blessing on her humble efforts to unite her parents.

Imagination and inexperience in the world's wanderings, had magnified to the old people the distance, and the perils of the anticipated journey; though lightly were they esteemed in comparison with the dangers that would beset her path under influences they deemed irreligious and corrupt.

With trembling fears, they looked upon the event that was to separate them from one who had been to them as a child. With tears trickling down his furrowed cheeks, the old man closed his morning prayer, with a petition that God would bring back to them in his good time, this "ewe lamb," that had been "unto them a daughter," and to preserve her pure in His sight, enabling her to resist the allurements of such as were "clothed in scarlet," with other vanities—who put on "ornaments of gold upon their apparel," and

instead, to deck her in the “garb of righteousness.” Then to “Him, who shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth,” he commended her—to the God of the Israelites, and that like them she might find manna in the wilderness, and as in the daytime He led them with a cloud, and all the night with a light of fire, so might she be guided in safety to the distant land to which she was going.

Sobs burst from the simple, affectionate beings assembled around that humble hearthstone ; among whom now knelt the forms of Arthur and Mr. Hamlin.

With pensive sweetness, Jeanie met their morning salutations, and with her arm in Arthur’s, wandered over her old haunts, to bid farewell to each remembered spot, even to the wood-shed and garret, the frolic-grounds of her childhood. Here she stooped to fondle the old cat, and her new family of kittens ; and to clasp in her arms “little Dick,” (who is an old goat now), and to kiss the last little pet lamb given her by grandpa ; then off into the meadows she roved, to say good-bye to the farmers, in whose rough palms she laid her little hand, with brimming eyes bidding them farewell. With a last look at the brook, now frozen, she returned to the house. Seeing Mr. Hamlin viewing her from the window, she went in and timidly towards him, telling him to come with her to little Pico’s grave. Over it she had planted a shrub of myrtle, and through the snow from it plucked a leaf, kissing it, as if it were the bright wing of her pretty favorite.

“Little Pico is blessed to be so remembered,” said he, watching the beautiful girl, so changed since he saw her last.

“Wasn’t he a blessing to me ?” Jeanie looked up gratefully. “Oh ! it was love so sweet and trusting, and he was so helpless.”

“I wish I had such a little bird,” said Mr. Hamlin, smiling.

"We shall never have another Pico ;

'It is hope which lifts the lark so high,
Hope of a lighter air and bluer sky.'

We then will not despair, though our Pico comes in some other guise. Do you know, Jeanie, that we must soon say good-bye?"

"It is a sad word. Poor aunt has gone away to weep, and Keturah is flying around wiping her eyes, as if she was both mad and grieved. Oh dear ! poor grandpa ! and grandma !"

"And where is Mr. Flint ?"

"He has gone to the village ; he never bids any one good-bye."

The family had all assembled, each one quietly assisting their young charge in her preparations to depart—grandma smoothing down the folds of her dress, while Aunt Jane, with gentle, caressing touch, put aside the hair that fell over her cheek, adjusting it more neatly under the simple hat, in which, half shaded by an ample veil, the young innocent face was ambushed. Keturah, in the meanwhile, with many tears and sighs, and much tribulation, was busy with some kind of a bag, in which she was tucking cakes and apples. Old Vulcan seemed active with nose and tongue performances, significant of his grief, while on the mat little Mink awaited the leave-taking to unroll and bark his adieu.

The parting over, by the side of her protector, amidst the whirr, the rumbling, the confusion attendant upon railroad travelling, she is borne away from her country home. Robed for her journey, Mr. Hamlin again observed a likeness in his young companion, which never impressed him pleasantly. It had at first prejudiced him against Jeanie. He was disappointed, on his arrival at the farm, to see the growth of

one he had ever, and would still look upon as a child ; and on starting she was embarrassed to find herself alone for so long a period with one she had so little known. Pico, she fancied, had made a bond between them, but she could not feel so free to talk and ask favors of him as she had done on her previous journey. She knew not why. Perhaps it was that he was more ceremonious with her.

Then again, so still and quiet she seemed, Mr. Hamlin almost forgot, as he occasionally glanced at her, that he had other than the little Jeanie of old, under his charge. The tiny, nicely gaitered foot, he could not fail to see, as it cosily rested near his own ; and so much attention was required to the comfortable position of the young traveller, that it was impossible for him not to feel that some tenderness was required in the care. At times she seemed to him infantile as the dancing child he first saw, so innocent and pure-looking was the rapt face, now seen in profile. While she was dreamily gazing forth from the car windows, he watched the rise and fall of her white lids ; and the uplifting of the eyes they veiled, the expression of which he could not fix upon himself ; although he sometimes caught a look which blinded him—carrying him into the past. He felt at liberty to scan one who was but half his years—knowing, too, that she was occupied with her own thoughts, and would not regard his cognizance of her speculations which were broken in upon by the stopping of the train, Mr. Miller at the time awaiting their arrival.

The interview was brief and affectionate between the father and his child, who had met but the week previous ; when again, the travellers went on—Jeanie talking more, but it was of her parent, who had seemed to her, in failing health.

With some comforting words, indicative of his solicitude for the invalid, he silently observed her, satisfied that it had

lain in his power to be of use to one so innocent and helpless.

While he sat beside her, thinking, night came on ; the pictures out the window grew dim and indistinct ; the engine whistled, shrieked, and tore ahead ; the cars flew madly through the night air, as if by genii borne ; the sparks came in showers on the vision of the young traveller, causing her to look towards him and say, "How beautiful !" He echoed her words, but was not thinking of the sparks. The twinkle of a lantern threw but a dim light over her, who had suddenly grown older to his imagination ; for he had awakened to the fact, that it was no longer the little Jeanie, but a tall, beautiful girl, with sleepy, half-shut eyes, and languid form, who sat breathing near him.

She was "Very—very tired."

"When shall we stop ?"

"Unless you desire the delay, we will ride through the night. I think I can make you comfortable."

"And be one day nearer mamma ?"

"Yes," and Mr. Hamlin thought, twelve hours nearer to him. "I will arrange matters so that you can sleep."

"I can keep awake." Jeanie brightened, like a sleepy kitten roused, while she shrunk from an arm that would have drawn her to a resting-place upon it. Mr. Hamlin made no opposition to the retreat, and arranged a pillow for her.

He then composed himself ; but his hat fell off—his head bobbed like other bobbing heads, and there was a car full of them, revealed in the near approach of a light, which suddenly awoke him. He had rested one arm, while he cramped the other ; and had no sooner become conscious of his own identity, than he was called upon to show his tickets. This reminded him that he had two, and that one belonged to the fair sleeper near him.

He tried to doze again, but while wondering why a woman in the seat adjoining carried her luggage in her arms, suddenly as out of no other engine, came a shriek shrill and piercing—he saw no smoke, but was conscious of great commotion, and discovered that the object of the disturbance was human.

The noise awakened Jeanie. He wondered impatiently why women, such ugly ones, travelled with such small encumbrances. Mr. Hamlin was provoked, yet consoled, for fresh attentions were now required for his youthful charge. They became a pleasanter task. The conviction that he was no longer young, for the first time crept unpleasantly over him. But if younger, would she have been confided so trustingly to his care? Unconsciously his tones grew affectionate, while he expressed solicitude for her night's comfort. She was only sleepy. The third time, she fell off from her uneasy cushion, when he drew towards him the unconscious head.

Jeanie now reposed quietly, without knowledge of his devotion. So Philip Hamlin passed the night—dozing, dreaming, and cherishing the child of his friend.

By dawn, she awoke refreshed. Bewilderedly she sought another position, and was busy recalling her senses, when Mr. Hamlin ceremoniously bade her "good morning." If not as invigorated as when awakened by the robins at the farm, with brightened looks she welcomed daylight. Her protector thought her ungrateful, but with renewed pleasure enjoyed her inspiring cheerfulness. He was sometimes annoyed that she attracted the observation of strangers, and chagrined when asked if he had his daughter with him.

For the first time she inquired respecting his family, and marvelled that she had not heard of his younger brother. She thought Ralph Larkfield a euphonious name, and

hoped yet to know him, but was confident she could never like any one as well as Arthur.

"How did he make you so partial to him?" queried Mr. Hamlin.

"That is a strange question." Jeanie smiled. "I felt a little badly, when I knew another was dearer to him than his sister; but I believe I have cured my selfishness."

"Could you resign him entirely, if his happiness required it?"

"That would be a hard struggle; but I believe any sacrifice can be made, with a great effort."

"I am not positive that a great sacrifice is inconsistent with a love of self. We may be so incorporated with the interests of one we love, that sympathy is so strongly excited, that their joys and griefs become our own. The effort to be sublime must be for one for whom we have never felt an emotion of gratitude, and from whom we expect no return."

"Still this might be selfishness," said Jeanie, "if the act was not secret, and even then, such generosity might make one vain."

"Yes, people are often proud of their own humility. The study of one's motives is a great one. Such analysis is profitable; to do good disinterestedly approaches nearer our Saviour's deeds than the most rigid performance of external rites."

"It must afford one a good deal of happiness to be able to do good."

"Such lies in a measure in the power of all. Great charities are not the sole means of happiness. Those who in daily life make sweet and peaceful their private sphere, who elevate the aspirations of the menial, by the inspiration of a cheerful word and tone of sympathy, and spare not the trifling service costing little, yet invaluable

to them, may feel the satisfaction of doing good. There are few who are as prodigal of gentle, courteous words to the infirm and aged, and have for children the smiles they bestow for self-interest. Wealth is not necessary for such kindness."

"Is the world so selfish?"

"I wish there were more possessing the spirit of little children in it. Those who do not love them are not always aware of their reason for the dislike: they are themselves too artificial to find sympathy with guilelessness."

"You mean that amendment, as well as charity, should begin at home?" said Jeanie.

"Yes, and to end my prosing, I consider that the elevation of the mind, and the formation of character, should constitute the main study of life. I do not believe in faith without works, neither in works without purity of motive in their performance—and that those who would form a standard on which to live and act, should do it on a solid and sure basis. We should pierce as with a needle, the intricate web of thought, and unravel each mesh, in the great study of the mind, that we may know of what our principles are composed. Prejudice and self-indulgence do much to crush benevolence in the heart. That we do not like people, their looks or manners, is no reason for not aiming to throw our influence in the scale, which lightens the burdens they may bear."

"But after all, our goodness, if we have any, is of no help to us as a means of reliance," said Jeanie hesitatingly.

"But does it not elevate us in the scale of being? Is not self-respect essential to the dignity of the human character? Would you rather go to an earthly court in rags, because you were sure of beautiful attire when you reached there? This is a subject on which the mind may dwell with safety, for the higher we rank in intelligence and morality, the more exalted, we may believe, will be our

position in a world, whose great source is light and knowledge."

"But how are we to attain so much light? we may think and strive for ever, and be ignorant. Life is so bewildering, to one who thinks, that sometimes I feel as if it was better to simply trust and believe."

"Would you commend the course of a traveller who wandered all over the world, looking only to the end of his journey? Would you not have him secure treasures, and preserve flowers and mementoes by the way, showing that he had not travelled without attainment? As wisely might one walk over diamonds and not pick them up, as not seek to enrich the soul's casket, as we pass through life."

"But these jewels," said Jeanie, smiling, "are not so easily obtained—and all the attainments we may secure, it seems to me, will leave us beggars."

"Never despair in the search, when truth is the desideratum, for God holds in His right hand the banner; and the more we study His attributes, the more clearly we shall see unfurled the Christian's flag. The heathen and the worldling both look up to the sun, as the typification of Deity, it being the most glorious object of inanimate creation, and the great illuminer of the universe. Other of His works, teach more palpably the principle of love, which is instinctive in all animate creation. Little Pico," Mr. Hamlin smiled, "flying to your bosom, is emblematical of the soul's longings. Love, Truth, Purity and Rest," he repeated, "these attained, have we not on earth a foretaste of heaven?"

The expression which lighted the face of Jeanie, attracted her companion. Charmed with its sweet earnestness, his thoughts wandered to the home to which he was conducting her, deprecating the influences that might there bear upon her character,

"Jeanie," said he: "in a garden of flowers, could you

withstand the inclination to pluck the sweetest, if you knew that the rankest miasmi arose from their blooms?"

"I have been taught self-denial, but perhaps have never known what temptation is."

"In your mother's home, you will drink it from every brimming cup. It is a Hymettus hive, and its sweets will either delight your palate, or make you yearn for your mountain rills. Your tastes will be there developed. But there is no spot where we have not a guardian angel. Every one has a conscience, and in all situations, are responsible for its warnings."

"I shall have one in dear mamma."

"Trust to no monitor like that within," said Mr. Hamlin, smiling sadly at the confident tone of Jeanie.

Observing her serious face, he changed his conversation to a playful tone, and before the termination of their land-route, had awakened many a merry laugh, and so extravagantly burlesqued her situation when he first saw her, he could hardly tell by the blushes, smiles and frowns of his listener, whether he had most amused or vexed.

They had now reach the southwestern waters. On the deck of the steamer with her companion, she watched the rippling Ohio and its landscapes of brilliant verdure. Seeing the vineyards on the river, she became curious to hear of those of other lands.

With patient minuteness, he detailed to her descriptions of trans-Atlantic scenes; and with many a wild legend adorned his narrations. With her, he traversed the Old World, stopping at sunny France, of which he told sparkling and pleasant tales—at golden Italy, until, in imagination, she saw the architectural glory of Rome; and on the shores of the Mediterranean, drank the inspiration of the past. Travelling on, with low and eloquent tongue he carried her on the charmed wing of fancy, to the banks of

the flower-fringed Euphrates, and to the land of the Moslem, beneath glittering Mosaic domes, crystallized, and star canopied—whereon is written, “God is light of the Heavens and Earth.”

In return, Jeanie wandered back to the farm, giving in her artless language, narrations of her childhood’s experience in country rambling—not forgetting each member of the family, now so tenderly remembered, save one, whose eccentricities she set forth in a light so ridiculous, that Mr. Hamlin vowed he would never be an old bachelor.

“I thought you were one now,” said Jeanie, smiling at his last remark.

He drew what consolation he could from this. In reply to her queries respecting his history, he gave her many incidents of his life—reserving one page, on which was written, his boyhood’s love.

He saw that on deck, and in the saloon of the steamer, she was to every one, an object of attention and admiration; knowing her less beautiful than her mother, he had perhaps lightly estimated her personal attractions; he was certainly surprised and annoyed by the observation she excited, and answered questions respecting her so briefly, that they were not repeated.

Dancing and games were the chief amusement on board. There was little in the long miles of cotton-wood, which lay far distant on the low banks of the Mississippi, to attract the eye of Jeanie, and in the muddy waves, through which they ploughed, but the charm of novelty.

Still she felt as if out upon a broad sea, so sublime was the wide waste of dark waters. When wearied of the scenery, he would tell her of the orange groves and sugar plantations, to which they would come before they reached the half-moon city.

Jeanie had been often solicited to dance, since she had

been on the steamer, but had declined ; being however requested by a little girl to join her in a waltz, she accepted the proposal. After an hour's absence, Mr. Hamlin joined her, when others had been added to the group, among whom was a strolling troupe bound for Havana.

She continued to dance, unobservant of his notice, or that of others : with eager and fascinated gaze, the professional artistes looked upon her superb carriage, and elastic, airy motion, among whom was the manager of the ballet troupe. As she ceased, he stepped forward, and while putting his hand upon her waist, asked her in French, to waltz with him.

Her cheek kindling, Jeanie retreated, and looking around the cabin anxiously, encountered the eyes of Mr Hamlin from the doorway. The incident recalled the time when he took her from the boys in the country village, and it unpleasantly occurred to him, she needed but the opportunity to be another Elinor Miller.

Jeanie looked earnestly into the dark eyes, fastened upon her blushing face, and fancied that in them she read displeasure, or else as in a dream, came back the same reproving look, that first met her own.

The eyes were nearer to her now ; and not meeting hers, he asked, while taking her hand, if she would go on deck with him. It was star-light, and a soft balmy evening ; they left the cabin.

“ I have a request to make of you.” Mr. Hamlin adjusted the falling shawl. “ Do not dance on the boat again ; it subjects you to impertinence, without a protector.”

“ I wish I did not like to, so well.”

“ Your step to the music, is like the willow to the breeze. One would not think, however, you preferred to make the exhibition of your grace so public. Tell me now, how you came when a child in such a place, and in such a dress ?”

"Don't ask me—please don't. I wish that I had never met you there."

"Why did you avoid my eye when I looked at you? You did not think that the stranger would be on the Mississippi with you to-day; and again find you one of a dancing troupe."

Looking for a reply, Mr. Hamlin saw that Jeanie was striving to hide her dropping tears. She had been keenly mortified.

"I did not intend to grieve you. How beautiful Venus is looking to-night. Can you see her 'horns,' through your foolish tears? Milton says :

'Hither, as to their fountain, other stars
Repairing, in their golden urns draw light,
And hence the morning planet gilds her horns.'

In what constellation do you class yourself? If I were to make a star of you, you should be called Alpha Lyræ, but I will not tell you why, because you are so pettish as to be offended with me. Are these muddy waves so lustral, that you are so devoted to them?"

Jeanie was still silent.

Mr. Hamlin continued :

"It is a romantic thought, that not many years since, no sound of machinery was here heard, nought but the paddle of the Indian, wafting his canoe over this waste of waters. Can't you fancy a deer and his hunter coming out of the woods?"

No word came from the bowed head.

"You looked much like your mother in the dance." Mr. Hamlin determined to awaken her attention.

With a half doubtful expression, Jeanie now raised her eyes. Could he mean to reflect on her mother? Thinking it possible, she reined in her white throat, and looked indif-

ferently—proudly upon the water. The similarity—almost identity, to Elinor Castleman, came over Philip Hamlin. The old feeling of prejudice crept up in his heart.

It was towards sunset. The monotonous sail was near its end, and at no distant period, there would be a prospect of nearing New Orleans.

The ladies' saloon was full—its occupants chatting, flirting, and over games rattling the dice-box. Young mothers played with their babies in the arms of their black nurses. Beautiful southern girls, reclined on couches, with the last new novel—dark eyed Creole women watching them, while their husbands or gallants lounged, idled, read, or paid them homage.

None seemed without amusement, or their pets—farther on, old men had their cards and wine—and the women who had no beaux or children, played with their lap-dogs.

Among the crowd was a beautiful French danseuse. She was one of the troupe, and a sister of him who had been so much impressed with the grace of Jeanie. They both made great efforts to induce her to join their circle. Deeming their advances impertinent, Mr. Hamlin pointedly avoided the party.

Jeanie's state-room was opposite that of the lady. Opening hers, the latter, as if oppressed with the heat, loosened her dress, and unfolded her heavy braids of hair—causing the unbound mass to veil her shoulders. She knew that one never saw the purple glossy mantle, who would not turn again.

Jeanie's eyes fell in admiration upon so much beauty, but while she looked, the lady tottered, as if with faintness. She could not speak English, but with pantomimic signs, called to her. She went instantly towards her, and laid her languid head upon a pillow, attempting, with restoratives, to revive the "sufferer." Opening her large black eyes, she fascinated

Jeanie with low caressing words, meaningless to her, but in her musical tones, softly melodious.

The trusting girl was now fairly within, when with apparent fear of intrusion, the lady locked the door leading to the cabin. At the same moment, the lattice opened, and at the entrance stood her brother, his eyes resting admiringly upon her.

Turning to go, she found herself surrounded by the foreign party, and an object of demonstrative admiration. Her efforts to escape were fruitless, and the lady seemingly too ill to render her assistance. With fear and embarrassment, she again went to the door, attempting to open it, but was earnestly solicited to remain with them, while the manager pointed to some ladies in their company. Bewildered, she sat down, hoping soon to escape by the way of the guards.

Mr. Hamlin sought Jeanie, and not finding her in the saloon or upon deck, believed that she had retired to her room. Night was advancing ; she still slept, as he supposed. He wandered to the opposite side of the boat, when he caught a view of her in the avoided circle, and by her side the object of his detestation. He observed that she looked distressed, and was vainly seeking egress from those around her, who closed all avenues to her escape.

Indignant with the success of a game which he knew had been played since the party came on board, he could only see her anxious face, and the odious foreigner in proximity to her. Their eyes met. Jeanie bounded forward. At this instant a crash was heard. Throughout the boat was felt a blow, and in every horror-stricken face was read a tale of imminent and awful peril !

A shriek went through the crowd ! We are lost ! *lost !* sinking ! *sinking !* The cry was echoed, and prolonged, until on each ear it came like the last wail of despair.

A fog had suddenly arisen on the river, and in the midst two noble boats had met !

With desperation, Mr. Hamlin rushed to the spot where Jeanie had stood. She was not there, but in the grasp of the stranger. Shrieking loudly his name, she struggled to be free. Precipitately he reached her. Self-preservation induced the man to leave the frantic girl. She would not with him leap into the boat to which all were rushing, but with open arms fell on the breast of Mr. Hamlin.

It was dusk ; the stars were hidden by the fog which had grown thick and dense, and the muddy waves came up higher around them.

Looking forth, they saw nothing but the bending bows of another boat, rocking, pitching headlong down—heard nothing but the crash of timber, the harsh rending of ropes, and with agonized sympathy, seemingly the harsher rending of human hearts, sending to God appeals for mercy. In the midst, swaying with his burden, Philip Hamlin bore the form of Jeanie to the side of the sinking boat, and made a leap for one fast filling. It was the last struggle—the last chance for safety ! They could not reach it ! Others were swamping in the flood.

The night had now come on. Clambering the side of the wreck, he reached a part of the railing, and with a rope, tied to it the form of Jeanie ; clinging to the same, he dashed with his burden in the waters. To swim in the rushing, boiling stream was a vain attempt ; he knew that they must be borne resistless on the mighty current. Trusting to Him who rules the waves, Mr. Hamlin plunged into the grim flood. Around them were the struggling, the drowning, and far below, the crew, and life-boats.

They saw their noble steamer lurch and sink, while over it came the remorseless waves. With its crowd of human beings it went down.

"Are you sensible?" said Mr. Hamlin, with an arm about the form of Jeanie, whose eyes he could see were turned towards heaven, as if in supplication.

"Yes." She spoke clearly.

"Should I survive, have you no message?"

"Love to all! Unite my parents—pray—trust"—

"I promise, if spared; but oh! have courage!"

A shout, long and piercing, went over the waters, and then a low, suffocating, "God have mercy!" came from the pale lips of Philip Hamlin, as a drowning sufferer caught hold of his person, and drew from him his only support.

"Jeanie! Jeanie! hold fast—I leave you"—

Thus she and her protector parted—the latter to escape from the grasp of one who left him without a straw to which to cling—around him dark, boiling eddies, threatening to engulf him. A floating piece of timber from the wreck, was driven past him.

Seeing it, he was enabled to cling, until picked up by a steamer downward bound. Kind sympathy came to his aid, when he awoke to the agonized conviction of having probably for ever parted with his charge.

He could only beseech for the boat to continue its search for her. Cruel and insensible seemed his auditors. What to them was the loss of one so young, to the "awful catastrophe"—the loss of "two noble boats?"

Mr. Hamlin returned to New Orleans. "Why," his aching heart queried, "was he saved to impart such misery?" Had the sun shone less gaily, the blue distant waves of the harbor shivered with roaring gusts, and the winds howled a tempest, he could have better borne his suffering. So bitter a contrast would not have then been seen without—been felt within. His heart could only moan, "How have I fulfilled my task! How brought thee, Jeanie, to thy mother's arms!"

Had not God taken her in her angel purity, that she might on unsullied wing, appear before His throne? Should he not bow his head, and say, "Thy will be done?"

Hitherto in his visits to Mrs. Miller, he had but one object—to promote the happiness of her husband, while he sought disinterestedly her own good. He had exhibited his severe condemnation of her principles—his scorn of the life she led, hoping that she might, while respecting him, feel to the core of her heart, compunction for her course.

He now called upon another errand! The mother was daily looking for her child with triumph as well as pleasure. For the time had arrived when the strife should commence—which should win the prize.

It was a game to play—one of skill as well as a heart conflict.

Each year of separation had increased the wife's feelings of bitterness towards her husband; and as he grew high in favor, influence and wealth, the more aggravating became her position, as his abandoned wife. She had resolved to win from him his idolized child, and for ever to seclude her from his sight. Judging of his acrimony by her own, she believed that he nourished the same purpose; and that but for a brief season, was Jeanie to be permitted, with his consent, to remain with her.

She had heard of her increasing loveliness, and of her growing resemblance to herself, and to a feverish heat had excited her imagination, regarding her fancied idolatry for her child.

Surprised and joyful she received the announcement of Mr. Hamlin's coming. Excepting at her evening receptions, he had never visited her. Showing herself with elegant simplicity, divested of the gorgeous decorations, which she knew he despised, with a smile, she extended her hand, and met the tightened trembling grasp, which alarmed and

bewildered her. Instead of speaking, he muttered a salutation low and inaudible.

Believing the change the work of love, and that the barrier between them made him wretched (little cause as the vain woman had for the belief) with winning tones she expressed her hope, that one so welcome, was not ill, at a time when expectation made her supremely happy.

The visitor looked pale, but was silent.

"Do you see," said she, "the beautiful roses I have gathered for our Jeanie? but stop—I think—I heard she was to accompany you—you have come to tell me of her arrival? How kind! how considerate! why need I doubt one, who can delight as well as torture—why do you not speak? and look so pale and haggard? You need not fear," she spoke in a low sweet tone, "not to meet sympathy, I know that your cruelty lies alone in your tongue, which will not always say to me, such bitter things?"

The words were banteringly, yet seriously spoken.

There was no coldness—no scorn now in the expression of the sunken eyes, that fell upon the mother of the sweet lost one—but pity so deep it blanched with agony the quivering lips, and palsied the tongue that could only moan: "I have sad news."

"She is ill! My darling is ill, and alone! And you have come for me! How well we both love this child."

Alluring as the breath of summer, came the fond words, from lips that would beguile the being of her worship:

"Yes—but God has loved her better—she is lost! gone down with the steamer! You have heard of the dreadful collision?"

"Stop! stop! I cannot thus be deceived! He has stolen her from me—and you are bidden to tell me so false a tale! Give her to me, and you will see that I am not ungrateful. Oh! forsake his cause, and cling to mine."

"Mrs. Miller, your child ere this is probably drowned ! I left her, clinging to a piece of the wreck. Be calm, if you can, and listen to me."

Mr. Hamlin briefly recounted the particulars of the accident, and the situation of Jeanie, as he parted from her, but before he could conclude, was interrupted by the shrieks of his listener.

"No—no—you could not save yourself and leave my child to perish ! No ! no ! it cannot be ! it cannot be ! You have hidden her from me."

"Pity for you, compels me to disregard your words. Jeanie, I have reason to fear, is no more among the living. Still there is one ray of hope. She was too sweet for the sorrows of earth. Yet—yet—we may trust."

There was something in the tone and words of Mr. Hamlin as he continued, that brought conviction to the mind of the mother. As he went on, his eyes staring, as if upon the wreck, upon the floating form of her dying child—his lips white with the tale they revealed, she awoke to the belief of his statement. Growing paler until her lips and cheek seemed bloodless, she sank backwards, her hands clasped, her features sharpened, as if by years of suffering.

"Tell me all." The speaker was calm. More of the dark history was revealed, when the mother's consternation changed to such wildness, that to compose her, seemed not in human power.

With seeming frenzy she denounced the treachery of her husband, while in a torrent of reproach, she called Mr. Hamlin the persecutor of her life—the cause of her most miserable moments, and now, the destroyer of her child.

Releasing himself from the clinging grasp of her fingers, which again seized his arm, he answered :

"You are mad—mad—poor woman !"

"I ask you not to pity me. Why have you made me fear

another life? Why did you take from me all hope of peace in this, and leave me nought but misery?—and you could not bring me my little Jeanie!—all, *all* I had in my gilded, mocking, unreal world."

Melted by the genuine suffering of one he had only seen in her hours of triumphant splendor, Mr. Hamlin addressed her, as he had never before done. Taking the hand that wreathed in and out of her hair, he said, his voice trembling: "I do feel for you; and for your distressed husband, who has ere this heard the news; for he has lost a child, as well as a wife. He will indeed need consolation now?"

"Oh where?" again screamed the frantic woman, "have you put her?—in the water!—in the water!"

Mr. Hamlin caught her as she fell. When she recovered, many were about her. The cause of her grief had been imparted, and some from pity, and more from curiosity, sought the afflicted, to hear her wail for her child.

He immediately returned to New York to the distracted father and brother, whose hearts were stricken with the terrible news.

Mr. Miller was prostrated, as if by the hand of death; and when his friend arrived, lay in a state of almost hopeless mental and bodily suffering. The latter hardly knew whether to bid him still hope, or to endeavor to reconcile him to the worst. Inquiry seemed vain, and was finally given over.

The survivors could only surrender Jeanie, as many are compelled to yield to the river and ocean-bed the form dearly loved, and to the God who reigns in mercy the soul of the dead. The grief of Arthur was only equalled by that of his father. How all had loved the simple-hearted Jeanie!

Poor Aunt Jane! Grief had changed her, as if by the crushing hand of time, and the old people were bowed with

sorrow. Even Zebedee wandered off by himself, and complained of feeling "poorly." Keturah could not, or would not, give her up, but sung louder than ever, "The Siege of Bellisle;" while at intervals she was seen to choke and sob, which emotion, if observed, she declared was nothing but a cold—that Jeanie was no more "drownded" than she was.

To Mr. Hamlin, Jeanie's loss had created a void, of what nature, he could hardly say. He felt that he had parted with what life could not replace to him—the confidence, the sweet trust of a guileless, unworldly heart. Was it not akin to an angel's love? He could not forget her last supplicating look, dimly seen—the holy serenity of her upward childish gaze, as she bade him trust in heaven. Then came on his memory the clasp—the wreathing of the white arms—the agonized yet glad embrace when they last met, to cast themselves upon the river.

Ringing on his ear, were ever her plaintive tones, her heart beating in hard, quick thumps against his own. Painful, yet sweet was the memory.

He thought he once had loved, but now it seemed that passion had only borne him as on a whirlwind's breath—that reason held no sway in the burning conflict. Changed were his dreams. He believed that if such insanity had been calmed in his breast, never more to control him—that it was only a child like the youthful Jeanie who could awaken the deep tenderness of his nature, and cause to well up from its depths the pure waters of affection. As he thought of her now dead, she seemed to have been younger; he felt that his soul had been exalted and purified by the communion he had with her, and long it continued to him a blissful thought, that, tossed wildly as she since had been, once she had rested her young head for long hours, peacefully upon his breast.

CHAPTER XXII.

MR. HAMLIN remained many weeks by the bedside of his friend. The sorrow of his grief-stricken son, rendered him no comforter. Added to Arthur's affliction, was the consciousness that the barrier between Mary and himself was now more than ever impassable.

He might have forgiven injustice done a sister while she lived, but his soul revolted at the thought of communion with those who had with an evil eye viewed a loved one now departed.

Letters came to him from the old people at Mad River, telling him of Mary's illness, and of their willingness now to receive him as her lover—communications to which he paid no heed. In the distance, he only saw the white robes of the injured one. By the declining invalid his days were spent, listening meantime with never-wearied ear to the oft repeated tale of Jeanie's last days and moments.

"Unite my parents," said Mr. Hamlin, "were among her final beseeching words." He then related the situation in which he left her mother, and likewise imparted intelligence which much affected Mr. Miller, that she suffered under the delusive belief that her child had been abducted from her. Through Mr. Hamlin and Jeanie, Mr. Miller's feelings towards his wife had been softened before his present bereavement, and were now melted with sympathy for one whom he felt mourned with himself as could none other.

The tie that had knit him to her, he now believed severed by death. Yet did not the lost one still plead with her sup-

plicating voice, "Love my mother?" He pictured her she had so idolized, suffering, grieving alone. He thought, but not with repentance, that he had taken her from the bosom where she had been fondly nourished, and that she, the crazed one, believed in her frenzy that he had wilfully separated them. Did not justice demand concession on his part, now that Heaven had defeated his intention to restore to her her child? He resolved to offer to her, her former position, and to again give her his confidence.

He wrote to his wife.

"'Unite my parents,' were the dying words of our child. Can an appeal so solemn and affecting come to us from her watery grave unheeded?

"Your grief is pictured to my mind, demanding the sympathy no one can offer you but one who mourns with the same sorrow. We have now the same burden to carry to our graves, and, blessed be God, the same consolation.

"Elinor, I am ready to bury the remembrances of the past, hoping that He who has so afflicted us, will also chasten and fit us to meet our lost one above. My heart is open to receive you, and though but for a brief period can such a union exist—for I shall soon follow poor Jeanie—yet may it not be mutually comforting that a reconciliation took place between us?

"Decide, Elinor, as your heart dictates.

"A. M."

The following week, Mr. Hamlin received the returned epistle of his friend, enclosed to him with a brief request that he would present it to Mr. Miller.

He performed the unpleasant duty.

The superscription told the tale. A brighter red burned for a moment on the hectic cheek, succeeded by an ashen hue. An agitated quiver passed over the thin lips, making low the murmur:

"She has answered me"—emotion which passed away, leaving the invalid tranquil.

CHAPTER XXIII.

LONG sad weeks had passed to Jeanie's friends, while she was supposed lost on the Mississippi, but her destiny on earth was not fulfilled. With despair, she saw the agonized look of him, who parted with her upon the water, and composed herself to perish in the waves.

For a while she remembered nothing more, and her preservers were ignorant of her name or destination. With others on the wreck, she had been saved by a steamer bound for a Red River port. Insensible, she was taken on board. While paralyzed by cold and suffering, she passed the orange groves she had so much desired to see ; and when her eyes opened, with horror she closed them, for around her stood in active service, the party from whom she had flown to the arms of Mr. Hamlin.

Finding that she was proceeding up another stream, with no hope for some time of meeting her friends, wild with grief, she implored to be left alone, that she might reflect and devise some means to be restored to those she loved.

Being claimed by the troupe, who pretended to recognize her as belonging to them, she was carried helpless to their apartments. Earnestly she plead for writing materials. The reply was ever made in French—"when you recover." With resolution and such energy as her situation called forth, she determined to ascertain her position, and chances for improving it.

The party who had claimed her, having lost their paraphernalia, changed their destination, and concluded to make the boat's trip, by whose commander they had been saved. Jeanie found herself upon a small steamer, among strangers, coursing up a narrow stream. She knew not its name, but saw that it was a serpentine pathway, and after parting with the Mississippi, gradually becoming narrower. The view presented on shore consisted chiefly of cotton plantations. Scattering here and there were negro huts, around which stood lofty trees, veiled in moss drapery, hanging from boughs of living verdure a gloomy pall. The mistletoe clung to the tops of the tall oaks, and the mocking-birds and paroquets winged in the warm blue sky.

In the dark coverts, she was told, the beautiful wild deer roved; but sad now were her fancies, and she could only think of the snakes that might show their spotted heads, and hiss at her from the underbrush, meantime shuddering at the sight of a long-jawed alligator coming out of the water, to creep up the red banks. Under other circumstances, Jeanie would have been pleased with the novelty of her situation, for though mid February, the sweetest, softest air blew through her lattice, and the charm that everywhere pervades the fragrant South, here lazily breathed. But she felt herself a prisoner, and, instinctively, that her situation was unknown to others than the people who had taken her in their charge. To her dismay, she saw no ladies on board save some rough specimens of humanity, to whom she could not look for sympathy.

Across her mind the surmise flashed, that he who conducted the company into which she had fallen, would like to secure her as a dancer in their troupe, and that for this object, had she received their devoted attentions. Trembling with fear and physical weakness, she prayed for Almighty protection. With renewed agony she thought of

the probable fate of Mr. Hamlin—and of the loss she had personally met in her present situation. In the depths of her soul she revered his memory. Yet too ill to appear on deck, or in the cabin, she crept to her doorway, resolving if possible to seek other guardianship. Her protectors had left her, as they supposed asleep and helpless. How thankful was she in this dilemma, for the light of reason, and that in all situations there was an all-seeing Eye to direct her wanderings. In the place of her own dress she found herself arrayed in habiliments foreign in style, and around her neck attached a crucifix and rosary. The conviction was now entire—she was adopted by the company, and henceforth to be made one of them. How she wished she had been unattractive and awkward, or that she had been less volatile and thoughtless in the display of an accomplishment that had occasioned her so much trouble. Again came on her memory the reproving but beautiful smile of Mr. Hamlin. It cost her renewed misery. But had he not taught her to be trustful even in sorrow? Faith and resignation momentarily lighted her face, and gave strength to her trembling limbs. The attire she wore but added to the delusion of those who saw her.

While leaning against the door, the dreaded manager approached her, and seemed both delighted and alarmed to find her out from her room. Enamored of her youthful beauty, presenting in its exceeding fairness a contrast to his dark company, with expressive gestures and action, he manifested, that she was too ill for exposure. With horror and timidity, Jeanie looked about her for a chance to escape. "We save you life," said the man in broken English, "your lover be drown—we keep you—make you, begar! ver happy." Then with demonstrative gesticulations he bade her go within.

"No—no!" exclaimed Jeanie, in breathless alarm.

"Me make you, you no go—spoil de limb, you get col—bregar ! we lose you—you die, in dis sea wind."

Jeanie attempted with a strong effort to rush past the speaker, but in her weakness staggered, and fell helpless, when she was carried insensible to her berth, where she became soon delirious. When sensible, she kept her eyes shut, that she might exclude the strange faces about her. She had long fasted. Drink was offered her ; she raised her head to take it, but seeing it presented by her persecutor, recoiled, and attempted to spring from her bed. Now more terrible than the stern authority of her keeper, were the proffers of love he made to her, signifying that if she remained unresistingly with them, they would make her rich, and she should be his wife.

Poor Jeanie ! how terrified she became ! A planter in rough apparel, was pacing the guards. She saw him through the lattice and sprang to her feet, and out the doorway : seizing the hand of the passer-by, she cried :

"Take care of me—I do not belong to these people—oh ! take care of me, and send me home !"

She had escaped from those who dared not pursue her, though she heard the oaths of the Frenchman, exclaiming in parenthesis :

"You drown—me no fish you up 'gain !"

Her appeal was kindly heard, when about her, came many who listened to her simple, eloquent tale. Vain was its denial by the enraged party, who had claimed her for sordid and vicious purposes.

With her new protector, Jeanie pursued her course up the river, comforted with the promise, that word respecting her situation, should be immediately sent to her friends. Her heart was in a measure soothed, and she was enabled to look around her with some curiosity and interest.

The water was low, when they reached the falls on the

river, and not of sufficient depth to allow the boat to pass loaded ; consequently, a scow of large dimensions was put in readiness to carry them over, while the steamer, lightened of its burden, went ahead to receive them.

With Mr. Cameron, her new protector, Jeanie went on shore. Trembling from the effects of recent illness, and the excitement of painful scenes, this adventure of little moment caused her emotions of terror. She was again to be trusted to a frail bark, and guarded by a rope borne over a descent, which seemed to her a perilous undertaking. *

She met the eye of a young man, who had been fascinated and deeply interested in a tale, which made her to him a heroine. His dashing, fearless address, at first caused her to shrink from him, but she was soon won to friendliness by his gentlemanly air and deportment—his gay bantering laugh causing her amusement, as she manifested some fear, on viewing the craft to which they were to be transferred.

Following by her side, he assisted the planter in finding a log for her resting-place, during the boat preparations, over which he threw his cloak, seating himself by her upon a stump. The manner and tone of his civilities, had about them a frank charm, that won both Jeanie and her guardian. She soon chatted with the stranger familiarly and pleasantly.

The time which they were detained, becoming to the cotton-grower tediously long, after some demonstrative yawns, he left Jeanie to the temporary protection of their companion. The romance of the wild spot among the cane-brakes of Louisiana, the novelty of a scene in a country, new to them both, the solicitude felt for one so young and delicate, exposed after severe illness, were circumstances tending to the advancement of their acquaintance. Without officiousness, he bestowed upon her many acceptable attentions, unthought of by the less gallant Cameron.

Her timidity grew less; as he talked to her of the cable, that "a steam engine could not break," and of his serious intention to wade over the "pebble stones"—his appellation for the obstruction, to her so alarming; moreover asserting, in the provincial dialect of a "fair acquaintance," on the steamer, that they would "up stream, as soon as thar were a smart sprinkling of moonshine."

But at present there seemed no prospect of the coveted illumination—making more cheerful the blaze enkindled by the negroes on the banks, around which they squatted, fantastically dressed.

The groups as they gathered in their picturesque attire about their camp-fires, their dusky faces gleaming in the mystical glare upon them, carried the fancy of Jeanie to gipsy lands, and in every old crone who there crouched in her tattered garments, she fancied a fortune-teller. The young man begged her to allow him to bring her one of the old women, that she might tell the destiny of each (ascribing to the negro race a gift of prescience), a proposition which Jeanie timidly declined; when he took from his pocket a small coin, asking her to show him her hand, that he might cross it, and tell her fortune himself.

Jeanie had been hitherto reserved. Although her good sense and reason forbade her actual belief in the fore-knowledge to which he pretended with gravity, still a feeling of superstitious awe crept over her, partly occasioned by the events which had marked her young life; and the thought of hearing her destiny fore-shadowed by one, whom she would never meet again, fascinated and irresistibly allured her.

The spot in which she was situated, to her was wild, dark and strange. The stars by which astrologers had told the fate of mortals, shone in the blue above her—the whispering winds as they came through the tall tree-tops, from

which the solemn grey beard fell—the sullen river flowing by, combined with the stillness of the hour, and the fear with which she was sometimes impressed that she should never see a home on earth, were to her weird influences, inducing her to hold out tremblingly her hand to him—who smiled as he caught in the planet light, the serious look with which she extended the quivering little palm.

The handsome young wizard held it for a moment, but seemed to have forgotten his object. His gaze had wandered to the deep blue eyes, and the metal dropped from his fingers, and chimed in silvery melody upon a stone.

He was reminded of his duty. Instinctively Jeanie felt her imprudence, and hastily attempted a release of her imprisoned fingers.

“Wait, beautiful girl, until I prophesy”—he hesitated—another searching look, caused her eyes to fall—“till I prophesy—we shall meet again.”

“I thought you would tell me of home—and when I shall be there—but I forget—you are a stranger—pardon me.”

“Why did you not seek my guardianship, instead of this old fellow? I will take you wherever you wish to go.”

“Oh! where is he?”

“Do not be in a flutter—I have some oranges—will you eat one? I have heard enough, to make me wish for more of your history. It was lucky for that frizzed monkey, you were with, that I was not your deliverer, will you not be communicative?”

“Pray don’t ask me—what am I to you?”

“A myth—a fairy—a something between earth and heaven, to bewilder and craze for the whole trip. Will you always keep the cabin?”

“Oh—I don’t know—I am ill, but look? our scow is ready.”

The pale face, and the sudden tremor of Jeanie were made palpable in a sudden glare of light, which the young man attributed to fear of her new mode of travelling. He knew nothing of the condition of Jeanie's shattered health nor how easily she was agitated. He offered her his arm, at the same time the fruit which he had prepared for her.

But Mr. Cameron came forward and took possession of his charge.

"What a coward!" said the stranger, still laughing at Jeanie as they entered the low craft. "You are not as badly off as a friend of mine was on the Mississippi not long since. There is no danger of a collision here, unless we meet a good sized turtle, on which we might wreck."

The allusion to the Mississippi caused Jeanie a thrill of horror. Was she not again on a frail craft, upon dark and fearful waters? She thought of the timber to which she had helplessly clung. Her imagination became painfully excited. The young moon just becoming visible, shed its light over her pallid face.

The crowd were jostled to give way. A lady had fainted. By daylight, Jeanie was cheerful, but at night the impression that she was going farther from home, she knew not where, overwhelmed her painfully. The young gentleman wandered restlessly about, for a sight of her, but until the end of the voyage, he had not been successful, excepting when she came out for a short walk at night with Mr. Cameron. During these brief moments, Jeanie had fascinated the stranger; perhaps the more so, that she yet remained to him a mystery; and he knew not that he had imparted to her thoughts their first rose tinge. He stopped at Alexandria.

On her journey, but for her hopeful trust in Him, who can bring light out of darkness, she would have sunk despairingly—yielding to the weakness of her frame, and trembling

heart. Sweet in her hour of trouble, were the words of the singer of Israel :

“ The Lord is my light, and my salvation ; whom shall I fear ? the Lord is the strength of my life ; of whom shall I be afraid ? Though a host should encompass against me, my heart shall not fear.”

Thrown upon the wide world, with no sheltering breast on which to lay her child-head, the more helplessly was she led to trust in God. The morning brought more cheerful resignation. With Mr. Cameron she went on deck ; and viewed with interest, her passage up the crooked stream, that grew narrower and more difficult to navigate. At times she seemed so near the bank, she felt as if within a wild and flowery forest—then her eyes would peer through dark coverts of leafy underbrush, where the rattlesnakes hid and coiled. Fearlessly she now looked at the wide mouthed monsters, that occasionally showed themselves on the logs protruding from the banks of bright vermillion, making game for many an adventurous shot from the boat’s side.

The top-most boughs of the trees, were gnarled together in heavy masses, forming arches solemn and cavernous. Then vast trunks would strike the eye, standing bare, and undraped in filed ranks, as if marching against no mortal enemy, but serried for giant warfare. The odious buzzard, and long-necked, screaming crane, contrasted their black and white wings, and solemnly kept companionship with their kind. All else was quiet, save the gushing music of some lone bird, or the note of the gold and green winged parquet, heard in the distance. Sitting in the genial sunshine ; fanned by airs sweet and aromatic, lulled into a feeling of security by a verdant soil so near; Jeanie became soothed into a forgetfulness of danger. Encouraged by new-born hopes, she looked up trustingly to Mr. Cameron.

Now to her mind came the pure counsel of her preceptor, who taught her in all emergencies, in the trials incident to her future lot, to be governed by a religious sense of duty ; and if bewildered in her judgment, that there was a monitor within ; a Bible for her chart ; and a God mighty to enable her to act. She knew not why she had so readily trusted her new friend, flying to him as to a father, from the persecutions of the unprincipled. With instinctive discrimination, she had chosen him from the crowd, who would have willingly protected her.

Who can judge better of the heart's fine gold, sooner than the eye of the innocent, or see the mine where it lies embedded ? Such metal needs no polish to attract the vision of the guileless ; it shines in the glance of benevolence, and gleams with vivid lustre in the face of the good and virtuous.

It was raining in torrents, when she and Mr. Cameron reached their port of destination, the head of navigation on the river. It was a place, not as now, full of well-built tenements, and paved streets ; but here and there a log shanty, looking forth upon uncleared land ; and in winter, upon a sea of red mud. Such was its aspect, when Jeanie went on shore with Mr. Cameron. She had received the parting bow of the young gentleman, without learning his name or destination.

With the dark pall over the heavens, and the miry depths below, Jeanie proceeded with her companion through the slushy streets, with a faint heart, in anticipation of going farther into the wilderness. Little encouragement was offered her, in the state of the roads, by the view she had of negroes belaboring with their long cracker whips, the mules upon which they rode, often stuck beyond all release to their gearing. As out of a miry grave, she looked about her ; and was made to believe that it was but a rainy season ; and that ere long her foot would tread on dry and

printless paths ; beneath such delicious balmy influences, as must cheer the saddest stranger's heart.

It was Mr. Cameron's intention to proceed immediately home with his young charge, and in a few weeks to return to New Orleans.

Excitement and sorrow had so seriously affected the health of Jeanie, that she was ready to give a passive assent to the proposal, only desirous that news of her safety should be forwarded to her friends.

After several days' drive through dense forests—their pathway full of stumps, the boughs overhead forming so thick a canopy, that not a patch of sky was visible, they stopped at night at a rude shanty. Here odd specimens of humanity made them welcome, and grinning blacks stared her in the face, with as much curiosity and intelligence as their uncivilized owners.

Retiring, she found herself in an apartment bare of furniture, but cheered by a brilliant blaze of lightwood, giving the negroes that furnished the chimney with ebony sculpture, a half savage aspect, fascinating her to look yet turn away, doubtful of her inclination to accept from them such services, as she had been accustomed to perform for herself.

But a description of the backwoods of Louisiana, is not our task, save such, as relates to Jeanie's wanderings through settlements, at that day, wild and uncultivated. The season was warm for the latitude, and with a clear sky came hot rays from the sun, making the arch of green above acceptable and refreshing.

Jeanie observed with interest the trees new to her, and with a keen sense of the beautiful, the gleaming flowers, amidst the forest's dark mantle. The lighter shrubbery of blooming vines, and the graceful tassels of the fringe tree, mingled with the live oak's green; and the dog-wood's snowy petals, showered plentifully in her path.

Here, too, the grey-beard from the loftiest branch dropped its mossy veil, and the misletoc, deriving its romance from the mystic vow of the Druid, made her peer far into the forest-depths, for a sight of its clinging tendrils, as it crowned the old oak's brow.

The woods grew darker and thicker as they proceeded, and the path more obstructed—the fording of streams and bayous increasing the difficulty of their progress.

Jeanie felt that it was selfish for her to indulge her own gloomy reflections, and she strove hard to be cheerful, and to seem happy—thus relieving the solicitude of her companion, who endeavored to amuse and interest her. They came upon a broad opening, and wagon road, which extended a mile through the wood, showing signs of proximity to a clearing and some habitation. But not long was she kept in suspense: she soon saw two women coming gaily forward on horseback to greet the husband and father.

Jeanie received a warm welcome, without manifestation of surprise at her coming—so common an occurrence was the arrival of a stranger guest at the hospitable country home of Mr. Cameron.

The affectionate meeting of the family, brought tears to the eyes of Jeanie, and when, arm locked in arm, the wife and husband left their horses, to wander together to their forest home, again was she carried sorrowfully back to the situation of her own parents. The young girl with whom Jeanie rode was fair and pleasing, giving evidence, in her tone and manner, of an accomplished education and high breeding. The mother possessed in her *passé* loveliness, the charm of winning manners, and that indefinable softness peculiar to the women of the South.

Virginia Cameron perceived that Jeanie was in affliction, and with deep interest conducted her to their cottage, where she bestowed upon her such attentions, as awakened

to bursting the pent up agony of her full heart. Not able to control her emotion, she turned aside after receiving the courtesies of her new friends, to look around upon the novel place, to which she had been conducted—a large log house in the centre of cleared but stumpy ground. The soil was arid and sandy, and about it, no shade, but the tall trees—that belted them in like living towers against the scarce visible sky.

Stepping upon a log, she entered the dwelling, where incongruity of style was presented. The furniture (much of it evidently of days of affluence), mingled with the odd conveniences that a new situation in the forest had occasioned its owners to unite. Remains of luxury and tasteful ornaments were displayed in rooms without ceilings, without window lights and with exposed rafters, old plate being piled on rude shelves. While accepting the hospitalities offered her, Jeanie endeavored to reply calmly, to her kind friend who had brought her thus far, to his home.

“Can you be contented with us, in our wigwam, young lady?” said he, patting her cheek.

“I ought to be,” she replied.

The wife and daughter delayed their inquiries respecting Jeanie, until they saw she had sunk into a quiet slumber, when they eagerly listened to Mr. Cameron’s narration of her sufferings, and to the circumstances which induced him to protect her.

It was a tale, that kept over the hearth-blaze, for long hours, the sympathetic listeners. And ere the fair southerner laid down her head beside the sorrowing Jeanie, she soothingly bathed her throbbing temples, and kissed the pale cheek so wan and tear-stained.

Refreshed by a nap, Jeanie arose after all was still, to look out upon the night scene from the door of the dwelling. The place where she rested, was full of elegant and tasteful

adornments, strangely contrasting with the rude building—the almost savage retreat to which she had been conducted. Starting back in alarm, she listened to the howl of wolves in the distance ; and saw that she was exposed by an open door to perhaps the rattlesnakes with which the woods abounded. Gathering courage, she approached the opening of the shanty, and sat down at its entrance, endeavoring to hush all sounds of terror in the song of the Philomela of the southern woods, whose melody made the night musical with song.

The novelty of her situation in the dense forest—the bright moonlight streaming in broad sheets of radiance within—the majestic trees which kissed the blue vault of heaven—the broad uncultivated extent of soil, bare and destitute of a blade of grass, dotted by negro huts, was a view mystical and impressive.

She was awed by the grandeur of uncultivated nature, and amazed that a lodge in that vast wilderness, could represent such union of refinement and rustic seclusion.

With her excited imagination, she could almost fancy she heard the pot of a witch boil, as the lurid light of brush fires, about which the negroes still gathered, blazed under the trees, and the stealthy step of one belated was seen going home to his hut. The impression of that night was never effaced from her memory. The melody of the southern nightingales (the mocking-bird), was inexpressibly sweet and soothing, and the air soft and balmy.

The peculiar holiness and stillness of the hour, awakened intense religious feeling. She looked into the patches of midnight blue, that gleamed with stars, dimly seen in the brighter effulgence of the moon, and around on the trees of giant strength, that sentinelled her like an army with unfurled banners ; and far beyond, guarding her, pictured a winged host from heaven's golden court.

She thought with tears of gratitude of Him who had carried her safely through the wilderness, and the greater perils of deep waters—though into a land far from her kindred, yet one of kindness and mercy.

Then, with a sigh, came over her memory the probable fate of Mr. Hamlin.

Leaning back on the rough timber of the dwelling, her pale face upturned, in rapt intense thought, she seemed a Sibyl in poetic dream: But a second look revealed more than fancy ever pictured in a young sweet face. It told of sad realities. Hers was not now beauty of feature or complexion—though of both she had enough—but as the light of a star, chaste and luminous, shines through the morning's misty veil, her spirit revealed itself.

The movements of Jeanie disturbed the young sleeper within, who rose, fearing she was ill. A negro woman lay bundled up like a piece of upholstery on the floor, at the foot of the bed, who rolled her eyes on Jeanie, and, raising her woolly head, dropped it like a brick.

An arm slid about Jeanie's waist, and a gentle voice urged her to retire. Thus won, she became confiding and affectionate, and before morning, Virginia Cameron knew much of Jeanie's sad burden. In return, she told her of reverses that had brought her from a lovely southern home, of dear friends abandoned for retrieval from debt, and of a sacrifice of the heart to accompany her parents into the forest. Her struggles were pictured to Jeanie's imagination, and in sympathy for another she forgot her own trials, and ere she fell asleep, realized that every heart carries its own burden, and that it is not alone the duty of the sufferer to bear the trials of life, but to bear them cheerfully.

The morning in the southern forest was one of magical splendor. There was no growth of under shrubbery to attract the eye, and she was north of the latitude where the

magnolia spreads its glossy leaves, and the pomegranate gleams with scarlet blossoms. Farther down, too, bloomed the crape-myrtle, with its brilliant pink clusters—all these Virginia had in her Alabama home ; here was but the sublimity of Nature's undesecrated kingdom. Beyond the limits of the plantation the soil was unbroken, save by the path which led out of the sombre woods. Here the deer roved, and the savage might have lurked undisturbed in his freedom. Near by, the sun poured down its rays on broad fields of growing cotton.

Jeanie was amazed to see the household assemble from different tenements about the main dwelling to breakfast, and wondered if some of them had not found their lodgment with the squirrels and paroquets, so little was the gathering like that of a northern family. Some of the male sex appeared with their guns and sporting equipments from the forest, where they had slept in hammocks. Breakfast was served in the broad hall, unsheltered from without, where servants, many in number, stood in waiting. When Jeanie and Virginia appeared, Mr. Cameron and his wife had already taken their coffee, and roved off together to visit some of the negro huts, each one of the family breakfasting at their leisure, and in the manner most agreeable.

Horses were then ordered, when the young ladies departed in a bridle-path for the woods. On the saddle Virginia was mostly at home. So Jeanie passed many of her hours of sojourn on this southern plantation, examining with the eagerness of a child, the verdure new to her. With the instinctive delicacy of a refined mind, she soothed, without opening, the wounds of Jeanie, endeavoring to while away the days of suspense, passed with trembling eagerness by the latter.

From the time of Jeanie's supposed loss, Mr. Miller rapidly declined in health. His countenance grew sunken and

haggard, and his moods desponding. At his earnest request Jane Selden came from the farm to visit him.

Together they talked of Jeanie, whom they had resigned as not among the living.

A month had elapsed, since with its crushing weight the sad news came, when the letter from Mr. Cameron was received, announcing her safety, and situation at his home.

The invalid opened the communication in presence of his family, tardily. He had ceased to feel interested in matters of business, and believed this from Ralph, who was now in the country of Louisiana.

But when the joyful news was revealed, like the sudden opening of heaven's light upon the dungeon sufferer, it stunned him with its overwhelming power. A film came over his eyes, the blood rushed to his heart, and the form of the sick man rolled from his chair.

Much alarmed, Arthur hastily perused the letter, when agitation deep and intense pervaded a circle but lately one of gloom. Every face in the group was pale with joy. A murmur of thrilling emotion escaped every lip, Mr. Miller exclaiming with the return of sensibility, as if to Heaven :

“Let these arms once embrace her and, oh Lord ! thy servant will depart in peace.”

Arthur read and re-read the epistle, kissing the postscript of Jeanie, with tears that blotted the page. Mr. Hamlin was alone silent. After the first burst of joy, he sat holding the trembling hand of his friend ; his eyes averted from the glistening sunken orbs, that ran over, from gratitude and weakness. While believing her lost, he had enshrined her in his heart as the object of his first holy affections. He had appropriated and espoused her, while he lived on the memory of her last look. To him she had given her last appeal ; to him entrusted her work on earth, and for him prayed with her last sweet breath. His pure

beautiful ideal he could no longer shelter and protect, for she who had composed it, breathed, lived, and in her lovely presence would again bless the hearts of her friends—their, not his, little Jeanie.

He was angry with himself, that he had dared such sacrilege, as even in thought, to claim her for his own—to cherish her in secret, affording him the sweetest page in the book of memory—she so young—the childlike, trusting Jeanie!

He was glad that so close a veil shrouded his emotions; and that no one, not even the “ewe lamb” herself, could ever know how wild, how presumptuous had been his dream.

A dream, a vision, had indeed been the love for little Jeanie, to Philip Hamlin—filling the aching void that had for fifteen years made his wearied heart but a receptacle for buried hopes: but now he put the reality far from him—never after the blessed news came of her preservation, thinking of her as he had dared to do, when he held her a wearied sleeping child in his arms. That she had suffered in her belief of his loss, as he had done in that of hers, he could not credit; although in her letter to her father, she had feelingly alluded to the grief he must endure in the loss of his friend. His first impulse, was to go immediately for her; and either bring her to the North, or leave her with her mother in New Orleans; but Arthur had made similar arrangements, which were indisputable. Both had forgotten, in their eagerness to regain the lost child, that Ralph was now in the same region, and coming immediately to New Orleans, having been South on business of Mr. Miller.

The latter suggested he should be instructed to forthwith seek her, and place her under the protection of her mother, he hoping to meet her, on his way to Havana, trusting, if briefly, to prolong his life by the change of climate.

How could Mr. Hamlin advise this course ? The protection of a wild boy ! for such Ralph would ever be in his estimation—and yet, with his brother's improved habits, could he raise an objection to a plan so feasible ? Ralph was within a day's journey of her present location, and the distance from the North was not then easily overcome.

Mr. Hamlin stifled his rebellious feelings, and made no objection to the plan finally resolved upon by her father and brother—that the gay, but now his trustworthy younger brother, should be the escort and companion of her journey.

A letter from the invalid was accordingly dispatched to Mr. Cameron, with an out-pouring of his gratitude, and by the same mail went many loving epistles to Jeanie.

To Mr. Hamlin was appointed the task of acquainting Ralph of the duty required of him, which he reluctantly but faithfully performed—filling his letter with injunctions, and such advice relative to the care of the “child of his employer” as caused its impatient recipient to throw it aside, as “superfluous nonsense”—considering his experience in all “chivalrous adventures with damsels of both high and low degree.” “A bore enough,” he declared it “this care of a school-girl, without a sermon on moral responsibility, natural depravity, and original sin, as a prefix to the trouble.”

Ralph Larkfield, had not to his knowledge ever met Jeanie; and now felt little inclination to go farther into the woods, in the present state of the roads, for any object—much less, as he soliliquized, “among the Red River savages to look up children.” But seeing no alternative, he wrote to Mr. Cameron, to “have the girl ready,” naming the time when he would call for her.

Jeanie had been desponding all day, because no letters had come by the weekly mail, which was brought on horse-

back, and at this season often soaked by its passage through bayous and swamps. But now, since the late heavy rains, the water was high—log-paths had floated off, and the roads rendered almost impassable—circumstances which had delayed the communication, on a subject of such deep and thrilling interest to all concerned; but when evening came, and Mr. Cameron handed her the long looked for package, stained and half effaced as it was, all sensations were overcome in emotion made intense by the news of Mr. Hamlin's safety. Lastly was read the communication to Mr. Cameron, in which he learned that they must part with the little girl, they had all begun to fondly love.

"I do not think that I shall trust our Jeanie with this young man," said the planter.

"May be is not so youthful," said both mother and daughter, perusing the epistle from Ralph.

"I reckon he is," replied Mr. Cameron, laughing, "and too fast for my little Yankee prude; that I know from the tone of his letter, and some of his emphatic expletives. Read this about the roads, and the danger attendant upon his 'wine and plunder.'" Mr. Cameron read on, and with a shout exclaimed (in the language of Ralph), to his wife: "Be sure and have the girl ready, without delay."

"Not very sedate, I fear," said Mrs. Cameron, looking at Jeanie. Her eyes were full of pensive thought. With apprehension of the water, and timidity respecting the stranger, she summoned courage and said:

"He is Arthur's partner, and Mr. Hamlin's brother; I am not afraid that he will not take good care of me."

Virginia looked sad, in view of the parting; and proposed to Jeanie to take one last walk together. Their arms entwined, they went forth for a long ramble, clinging more affectionately, in view of their separation. How pleasant had now become the sandy, hard paths, which at first looked

to her so bare and cheerless ; in them she had learned, it is not in the greenest walks of life, one always finds the most cause for gratitude—and on no flowery scene in the garden of the North, had she felt herself so near to Heaven, as when bereft of home and friends, she had stood alone among the solemn towers, that had kept for centuries their restless eternal wave on high—the rushing of the winds through their branches—the anthems of the birds their eternal music. Here she had found no beautiful green hills on which to rest her eye, no valley of sequestered beauty ; but she had learned that there was no spot so wild, but that it could be made one of contentment and happiness—no place so barren of society and life's pleasures, but could be productive of enjoyment to hearts governed by the law of kindness.

A loud call had been made for the dogs the next morning, when Jeanie heard, mingled with the usual sounds preparatory to hunting, that of a young man's voice, uttering in vehement language, denunciations on his night's experience ; and the troublesome time he had finding his way to his present destination; which were delivered in no gentle tone to the servant, who, with grinning obeisance, took his animal at the door of the dwelling.

With trepidation, Jeanie felt that her new escort had arrived : throwing her arms around the neck of her young friend, she exclaimed, “ Dear Virginia—he has come ; but I know he is so annoyed with the trouble I have occasioned him. Do look out and see him—I dare not ! tell me how he looks !”

The young girls had not yet appeared from their outer lodgment—the little building with its one rough timbered room ; but had long heard the negroes swearing about the grounds, the cackling of fowls, and the active preparations ever going on, on a southern plantation, for the accustomed

morning sports, but still rested, chatting and lamenting their coming separation.

As Virginia complied with the request, by peeping forth from a wide crack in the logs, she caught a view of a fashionably dressed young man, of handsome exterior, bespattered with mud, which a negro was whipping off, while he employed himself shaking out his tumbled curling hair, in the meantime making inquiries of the servant respecting his master.

“Oh, yaa, mass’r, he done shot bag o’ partridge fore dis.”

“Any one at home, boy? I have ridden since daylight, and am ravenous as a wolf.”

“Missis be up, sar; and de young missis be long in, reekon, when dey hear de hosses.”

By this time, Virginia appeared in view, her face radiant with the excitement of the new arrival. She turned to say to the tardy Jeanie :

“He is so handsome!”

“Oh dear, but he so hated to come!”

“Don’t feel so, Jeanie darling—I do not believe that he is so uncourteous. Let Jipsey smooth your hair.”

Finally persuaded, Jeanie proceeded towards the house with Virginia—her appearance contrasting unfavorably with that of the pretty southern girl, for truly, she was externally in a sad plight, having lost in the boat’s wreck her wardrobe, save her disfigured habiliments, now ruined by her perilous adventures on the river.

Virginia’s cheek wore a bright flush, as she entered the presence of the young man, who, on the door-log, awaited the coming of her father, from his morning hunt.

Jeanie, instead, was pale and timid, and unpleasantly affected by the reluctance manifested by her escort in the duty he had undertaken.

With her eyes downcast, and her features subdued in their

expression, she was less inspiring to the gay Ralph, than the smiling, beaming young beauty, who cordially gave him her hand, with a welcome to their home.

Startled with a vision so sweet, he presented his own, and with an indifferent bow to Jeanie, seated himself by Virginia, with whom he was talking familiarly, when Mr. Cameron appeared with his gun, followed by a brace of pointers.

"Welcome to Deer Wood, young man. You have had a night of it. And how comes on the 'wine and plunder'? I have saved the young lady for you; and by your looks, I think we have met before—eh?"

"Most assuredly we have," said Ralph, with a sudden glow of pleasure; "and where is the young woman who was with you on the river?"

"Why, Jeanie, have you not been presented?"

With sudden recognition, Ralph Larkfield rose from his chair, and went across the room where Jeanie had retreated, and with his old frank manner said:

"This happiness is so unexpected, I ask ten thousand pardons for the oversight. But remember, that I never saw you by daylight. You did not come on deck."

The eyes that had so fascinated Jeanie's young admirer were now raised, with a serious, half plaintive look, as if deprecating observation, while she said:

"I did not know you"—then blushing, thinking of his unwilling coming, and that he was a brother of Mr. Hamlin, and that she ought to be more gracious to him, if he did deplore the trouble she was to give him.

"I certainly did not think that my prophecy would so soon be fulfilled, and that so soon, and here, we should 'meet again.'"

The recollection of the few moments when she had so willingly, impulsively given her hand to a stranger's clasp, and

that that stranger was now to be her companion and escort on the same long journey, caused her heart to beat flutteringly.

Her agitation was too perceptible to escape the notice of Ralph. He said, in a lower voice :

"But to meet and part so soon, was not the gist of the prophecy. I have come to take back with me a child of a friend, who is here, and I suppose, ready for me, or I would prevent such a catastrophe."

With her eyes widely expanded, Jeanie looked at the speaker, her features glowing with earnest inquiry.

"Do you not know that I am that child—that troublesome burden, for whom you are to suffer such martyrdom?"

"The martyr then purchases heaven by his sufferings. I am indeed too happy to find that I have so misunderstood my brother. Deacon Phil spoke of you as a child; but I suppose you seemed so to him, at his venerable age."

"Oh, there is no mistake—I look older than I am."

The cheek that was turned aside to hide the betrayal of embarrassment enchainèd the eyes of Ralph, who endeavored in vain to assure Jeanie that any service he could render her would afford him too much satisfaction to cause feelings of obligation. Virginia wondered how Jeanie could fail to pardon him. His ingenuous manner, and fascinating address, made her at once forgive an offence she had once thought inexcusable. As he glanced from one sweet girl to another, he hardly knew which he would like best for a travelling companion. He began to be ashamed of his ill-humor.

Jeanie soon left to make preparations for her journey. A flirtation meantime went on, when Ralph convinced Virginia he was deeply smitten with her charms, and that a hundred such roads could not keep him from again visiting Deer Wood.

Jeanie returned, equipped for their journey, looking again so much like the fair will-o'-the-wisp that had fascinated him

on the river, heart enlisted, he only awaited her movements to be off.

It was evident to Ralph, that she had not only read his letter, but overheard his impatient remarks. The parting affectionately made, the young travellers set out on their journey, in a rumbling vehicle, drawn by an equivocal looking animal, of the genus Mustang, a beast with the best training manifesting few amiable characteristics, and this one of a sample decidedly mulish. Thus they started to go through the southern parish.

The morning was fresh, and the verdure, from a recent shower, green and sparkling. The roads were badly gullied, their condition judged by the deep pools of water about the plantation. The prospect looked dubious for rapid or successful progress, but Ralph would not listen to talk of delay, and all urgent invitations for a longer visit were by him decisively declined.

With gay spirits he had seated his charge, and departed amidst the cheers of the household. The greater the difficulties, the more romantic and exciting seemed to him a journey made suddenly agreeable in prospect. But he was soon annoyed from an unlooked-for source. Although dependent alone upon him for society, Jeanie continued taciturn and uninspired by his varied moods.

Yet there was no lack of excitement ; at times she would be thrown off her seat into the crazy old bnggy, to rebound and strike her head against the top, then fall over against Ralph, while down ditches and over logs, and swamped lightwood, they travelled fast as obstructions permitted, towards Red River.

Refusing assistance, the resolute Jeanie continued to brave all difficulties in their progress, endeavoring to sit demurely upright, an effort so completely defeated, as to cause much merriment to the gay Larkfield.

But in vain the latter tried to recover the social position that he felt he had momentarily secured, while on the river ; such, as he believed, established his title to a familiar acquaintance should they meet again. Her sole aim seemed to remain a cipher to him on his journey, sitting by his side neither company nor burden. That she was beside him in her fairy presence, he felt with pleasure, for Ralph had been in love with his starlight acquaintance since the first moment of his interview with her, and that she was the same lovely girl who had given him her confidence, he felt with each intonation of a voice, whose sweet accents had first won him.

Ralph thought of a cigar in lieu of her graciousness.

“ Is smoking objectionable to you ?”

“ Don’t regard me, Mr. Larkfield, I beg, more than if I was not with you ; and pray excuse me, for not better keeping my seat.”

“ Certainly, Miss Miller—for all past improprieties.”

The tone and speech was emphatic, and although its raillery was evident, still it piqued Jeanie, who pouted a little, much to the satisfaction of her companion. She now more firmly braced herself against the side of the vehicle.

“ You have a very cool way of telling me, that you are both independent of my society or aid,” said Ralph with affected hauteur.

“ I know that you have come a long way for me, and I am so much indebted.”

“ You are certainly the most uncompromising young lady I have ever met. Let me see if you are in earnest.”

Ralph made an effort to see the face he so much admired, momentarily bewildering the vision of Jeanie with a smile, as he seemed to ask why she was so inaccessible.

“ I have nothing to pardon, Mr. Larkfield, you are very obliging and kind.”

A jolt lengthened Jeanie's last words into a half scream, when with the same impetus, she was again thrown restless against Ralph. With a loud laugh that echoed through the forest, he held down with one arm, the bounding figure, and reined in his somewhat fractious beast.

"These 'thankee marms' are inevitable. If you don't sit more quietly, I shall have to return for assistance."

With her vivid sense of the ridiculous, Jeanie could no longer preserve her gravity, and although she continued her efforts to be companionless, ceremony was banished by the sympathy at once established between them in their common efforts to resist the law of gravitation.

"I am surprised and shocked," continued Ralph—as Jeanie rocked with a to-and-fro motion.

"I cannot help it, apologized Jeanie, you drive so fast"—

"Whoa ! beauty—now see if you can be more civil, because I am going to light another cigar, and wish to be exempt from additional danger."

"I cannot forget that you came over this same road yesterday," laughed Jeanie, "and are yet alive."

"Yes, and for one so unappreciative—but I think you will yet beg for assistance, when the door of mercy will be shut upon you. If I had been with you on the boat, I fancy you would not have been in these woods to-day."

"Do not say so, it was my own imprudence, that separated me from Mr. Hamlin."

"Ah ! this reminds me, of Philip's injunction not to let you patrol the decks, and other dangerous public places."

Jeanie understood Ralph to have quoted his brother literally ; and felt keenly mortified that Mr. Hamlin should have thought such an injunction necessary. "Am I so giddy ?" she soliloquized : "does he think me such a child ?" she then recalled his reproof, when for the second time, he found her making, as he called it, a "public display."

Deeply coloring at the thought of such a condemnation, she said : "The caution was unnecessary."

Ralph observed the flush.

"How would you like such surveillance—espionage I may call it? because I mean to fulfil his directions in the letter, and to the letter."

"That depends upon the guardian I have. You know I do not mean to tax you, Mr. Larkfield, or check your amusement on the boat."

"Ah! you are thinking of my trip up the river, and I dare say saw me at the card-table, but indeed, Miss Jeanie, I must expel from your brain some preposterous ideas, that have found lodgment there. If it was not an awkward matter, getting on my knees, riding over stumps, I would in a situation so affecting, inform you, you were the most charming little simpleton I ever came across, to suppose I would not be snagged on land or water to take this drive, asking," Ralph spoke in a lower tone, "as my reward, the privilege of again turning chiromancer. The prediction should not now be so indefinite."

The allusion embarrassed Jeanie, who suddenly assumed her former reserved manner.

To his surprise he found it no easy matter to flatter, or become familiar with one, whose manner, occasionally, was strikingly like that of her mother in her proudest moods. He was puzzled, having been accustomed, young as he was, to flirt with every pretty girl he met, and to successfully dupe the most accomplished coquettes, with his rare fascination of tone and address.

The drive and its exercise in the morning air, invigorated the frame of the delicate traveller, causing her cheek to kindle, though the color was too fleeting to characterize her beauty as blooming.

With her feelings of diffidence, under the guardianship

of one, whom she believed had assumed it reluctantly, still it was impossible with her sensitive appreciation of kindness, to be insensible to the devotion of Ralph to her comfort. Thus her manner to the latter was unaccountably capricious, such as sometimes piqued him into disregard of her, then winning him by her smiles and confidence to the display of his former admiration.

He knew not why she exercised over him a power so potent. He was an admirer of beauty, but Jeanie was not brilliant enough to constitute his ideal. She was too delicate in health for his boisterous spirits, and too reserved for the flirtation he had promised himself. He had not intended to love the "little prude," as he called her, but anticipated an exciting conquest of her affections. He was chagrined, and felt unqualified contempt for her admiration of all outward prospects. If he ever inclined to call a girl ill-bred, he did Jeanie. For who else had so annoyed him, on so brief an acquaintance?

It might be she disliked his cigar. He threw it away, but wished he had it again, for she still counted the hosts of the interminable forest.

He often became irritable from her displayed indifference, and during their journey occasionally manifested his petulance openly and causelessly.

He had left the buggy to gather for her a rare flower. She carelessly lost it—he believed she threw it intentionally away. At the time a large snake came in their path, it alarmed the horse, who reared, and threw himself back upon his haunches.

"Sit still and keep quiet," said Ralph, half sternly.

Jeanie suppressed a scream, but when she saw the venomous reptile curl himself for a spring towards them, she grasped his arm, and begged him to allow her to jump from the wagon.

With a vexed look, he replied: "No—will you not trust me to take care of you? Release my arm, and let me drive past the fellow."

Without delay, Ralph rose from his seat, and with the reins firm in his clasp, struck his beast several hard blows, urging him forward. With a fling-up of his head, and a bound that threatened his harness, the mustang cleared the snake, who had sprung towards the buggy, but missed his aim. The fright caused an exhibition of all the unamiable qualities possessed by the animal. With a countenance expressive of his disdain of those within the vehicle, and curiosity towards the reptile, he pricked up his cropped ears, elevated his cropped tail, and with a snort that bespoke defiance to three-headed Hydras, with a general bristling up, and a simultaneous dance of all his legs, the horse started on a furious run, over brush-wood and stumps, until he had exercised himself into an unnecessary perspiration, when he as suddenly stopped, and turned his head with a fiery but vigilant look towards his now exasperated driver, and his alarmed companion.

Rage caused Ralph to tremble and grow pale. With the butt-end of his whip, he leaned forward and whacked the obstinate animal until Jeanie screamed, and begged him to desist.

With no reply, save a look expressive of anger, and an oath reflecting on the character of his beast and all his connections, Ralph used his efforts of action and speech to start him ahead. But all to no purpose. He still stood immovable, looking in the face of his enraged commander.

"I'll break his neck, or make him turn his knotty head," said Ralph, as he sprang from the buggy.

In vain Jeanie implored; with every movable limb within reach, Larkfield pommelled the invincible beast, who manifested no idea of changing his purpose or position. With

his sides reeking with foam, his eyes gleaming like fire, and his legs apart, he stood in a fixed defiant position.

The appearance of the horse, and the now despairing look of Ralph (who stood with his cap off, wiping his forehead, and panting with his exercise), excited Jeanie's sense of the ridiculous, causing her to smile through the tears coursing down her face.

"Coax him," said she ; "give him some water, or something to eat—poor old Mustang."

"I'll coax him with fire and brimstone, and his owner too. They shall both see the infernal regions, before I have done with them. The scoundrel that I hired him of, ought to have an eagle at his liver through eternity for this imposition. You had better alight here, and while we lunch, perhaps the rascal will conclude that he has looked long enough for snakes."

"I will try my power over him, if you have not killed him, whipping him so dreadfully." Going to his head, Jeanie laid her little hand upon his face, and with a caressing motion and soft tones, besought him playfully to look the other way.

Larkfield's rage now turned into amusement.

"He's a Pegasus, worthy of translation, if he has lost his wings. Could I find a hornet's nest, I would set it about his ears, and test his 'native sprightliness.' I wish you could have heard how he was lauded to me for this qualification. Leave him, and we'll take a snack. Thank fortune, I have some consolation in the box."

Fear of snakes at first alarmed Jeanie, but Ralph's invitation to the repast of which he soon made a tempting display, was accepted. Before the stiff-necked brute he placed a bag of corn.

"The best of southern bacon, bread, wine of Burgundy, and water from Hyperia's spring—of which will you

partake, fair damsel?" Ralph bowed low, as host of the entertainment.

"But are there no savages—no wild beasts here?"

"Plenty of them—don't you hear 'em growl?" Ralph showed a brace of pistols and a bowie-knife—making a flourish of his weapons.

The courage and decision in the manner of the speaker, in spite of his braggart valor, impressed Jeanie, and as he actively exerted himself in spreading a blanket upon the grass, and in the arrangement of various dainties, she had never before thought him so handsome.

He first brought out from the box a ham-bone with some biscuit, which he promiscuously scattered with pickles, chicken joints, cheese, cold eggs, pepper, salt and other condiments which the jolting had shook together, into a ragout suiting the most fastidious Frenchman. It was well-seasoned, and as in the jumble, some of the matches were smoking, Ralph congratulated Jeanie, that the repast was not underdone. He had taken better care of some bottles, which came out of a pail of straw, and with a display of affectionateness, wiped them, praising their ruby glow as he held them in turn up to the sun. Then came a hunt for a corkscrew, which he found in a small sweet-potato pudding. It was ridiculous to see how things were shaken up. But no matter where it was, Ralph put it in its proper place.

"After you," said he with a comical gesture, holding the opened bottle to the lips of Jeanie.

"Excuse me—I prefer water."

"Do you see here?" clapping his hand on his weapons, "You are under my care and authority. Don't you remember Philip's directions? You have not a good seat—bless me, you are sitting on a sunbeam—here, take this sheep-skin—anything but my wine-basket. Take a drop—do."

"No—I never drink wine, and wish that you would not."

"I can't do myself such wicked injustice. I should for ever lose all self-respect, to so neglect an old friend. Why, Miss Jeanie, I hold it my duty to be a supporter of the press—first assuring myself the article issued is racy and sparkling."

"Are you not fatigued?" said Jeanie, archly.

"Well, it was an effort—the next may be better. Look around you now, (Ralph put the bottle in the straw,) while I perform some chemical experiment on this conglomeration pie: it is a little too full of mustard and sulphur to agree with my physique. You'll find this chicken unmatched, I think. Now don't be stupid :" Ralph affected dignity,

"That will do better," said Jeanie, laughing.

"Then I need not write its gender under the bird this time?"

"I will excuse you, so that you give an eye to our amiable steed."

"Have you looked at him? I dare not for fear I shall shoot him. What if he refuses to go on, and we are left here like the babes in the wood? Would you cry? I would cover you up with leaves by day, and bay the moon like a bull-dog at night. I think our provender is likely to last—it is well cured."

"Oh, Mr. Larkfield, you terrify me at the thought, (her gushing laugh, denying her words,) what might happen to us? Do be very steady, and see if the horse is behaving better."

"If not it might be well to apply to his neck some liniment. I will conquer him by some manipulating process."

"Don't, please, whip him any more."

"Just take a peep: I must fulfill my duty to this bone,

when after a quaff of the nectar, I will endeavor to perform it to him. But stop, leave the wretch awhile, I will find a hollow tree, where we can moralize, poetize and enjoy the beauties of nature, as serenely as a pair of pigeons on a wood-shed. Don't step on the grass—but I won't tell you why. Now do be appreciative—a golden sky ! if we could but see it—a mantle of velvet, only it's terribly moth-eaten—Gothic arches, kissing the invisible stars—by the way—what an ugly veil you wear.” Ralph pulled aside the obstruction to the view he sought, and if he was still more audacious, we can only judge by the reproof of Jeanie :

“Mr. Larkfield ! you are very presuming—I will not walk with you.”

“Well, so be it—I think you are ungrateful—that's all.”

The wild Ralph was reproved, and thrown on his reserved rights ; still Jeanie, inconsistent as she might be, was fascinated, and although conscious of the dangers attending her journey through the long wood, she felt partially safe with him, if her confidence was not like that she had felt under the protection of Philip.

Yet pure and entire as was this perfect reliance, was it of the same en chaining power, as that which absorbed the faculties of her being, when mingled with the wildest mischief, Ralph plead for some return of the devotion, which silenced her tongue, and for moments spell-bound her with the witchery of his beguiling presence ?

Why was it, she had no time to think ? no power to check his exuberant spirits, that alarmed her with their controlling influence—and though he displeased her at one moment, why did she laugh, sigh, and forgive him the next ?

Seated on the trunk of the same old tree in that wild deep forest—resting against the same ivy wreathed tower, their young hearts beating with impulses warm and tender,

craving the sympathy that is inborn with human nature—the forest beautiful, leafy and secluded, the passionate eyes of the one, resting upon the river-blue depths they reflected ; hearing the low confession, the low earnest inquiry, was it cause for marvel that our heroine, with all the pure teachings of her childhood, the teachings of the monitor within, her veins thrilling with the first breath of human passion, should hesitate, her tongue falter, in her repulse of Ralph ?

Then wonder, reader, for the “No—no,” quivered the lips that shrank from the ardent kiss, with which he would seal a compact between them:

Then white as a snow-crystal, her delicate cheek grew, as conscience wrestled with her new born love. “No—no,” was still the firm denial—was he not yet a stranger—and headstrong in his intemperate language, and in the exhibition of his admiration and preference ? No—no—she could not trust him.

Ralph Larkfield, when chagrined, wore a haughty mien ; he did not urge his suit, for he saw her shrink, if not coldly, shudderingly, from him. But that she had hesitated, trembled, in her refusal, was a salva to his wounded pride. What did she know of him, he queried, that she could not give him her faith, as she had her beautiful smiles—aye even her tears and blushes ?

Why had she, so young, so keen an eye, so sensitive a conscience ?

Ralph Larkfield knew nought of the instructions of the maiden aunt, or that since her infant years she had been taught to control feeling by the guidance of reason and principle—to think and act conscientiously though every emotion of her breast warred with the contending passion.

Long miles they had ridden together, he looking, loving,

she dreaming, musing, yet shrinking from her daring, too gallant admirer.

Ralph Larkfield, as we have before intimated, was a boy of high adventure. He had run the gauntlet with many an older suitor, for the sport of winning, but had never loved. He had but one aim—to amuse himself. He was pleased that he had been mistaken in the child of his employer, when he found a beautiful girl of full growth, and womanly symmetry, instead of the school-girl of his imagination.

He thought so now, as she stood, her dilated form against a tree, her sweet lips slowly speaking :

“ Papa asked you to bring me to my mother: Is it not wrong to play by the way ?”

“ Did you never hear of one Tantalus, who was placed to the chin in water, with apples hung before his lips, tormented with thirst and hunger, but as soon as he attempted to drink, the waters subsided, and the apples flew off when he sought to catch them ?”

Jeanie gave the speaker a kind, reproachful look. “ I do not mean to be Tantalizing.”

“ Well then, Miss Miller, we will see how our Beauty is disposed. Perhaps the corn has mollified him. We must find a fountain to slake his thirst, and go on with his permission. Stay here a moment.”

Ralph went to seek the spot where he left his conveyance and horse, but to his consternation discovered no appearance of either. He looked about him in vain—the bag was left divested of its contents, and tracks of the buggy were visible. He feared Jeanie would be alarmed at his absence, and returned to her.

“ His Highness has turned his head,” said he, “ but I am sorry to say in a new direction, and taken an independent route for parts unknown.”

“ Oh, Mr. Larkfield ! what shall we do ?”

"Just as I say. Remain here until I find him."

"And leave me here alone?"

"Will you go with me? We may have a long tramp. I shall follow the wheel-ruts."

"Don't forsake me!"

Ralph's displeasure passed away at this appeal.

"I thought you would prefer my absence."

"I don't know what I prefer." Jeanie burst into tears.

"Take my arm, and don't cry."

The two started off to find the horse. Sometimes the wheel-marks were plainly visible, then by patches of under-brush they would lose sight of them. As they searched in vain, Jeanie became wearied, and, by Ralph, sat down to rest, saying, despondingly, "Oh! how much like life this is—searching for something ever ahead."

"He'll be a royal inheritance when we reach him! How tired you look! Don't your poor little feet ache?"

"No—only they are frightfully scratched. Hark! I heard something!—something like a horse shaking himself."

Eagerly both proceeded in the direction from which the sound came, when in the distance they saw the upset vehicle, and the mustang lying upon the grass, rolling and kicking.

"Mirabile dictu! Mirabile visu!" cried Ralph, clasping the waist, and jamming the bonnet of Jeanie, in his delight. So sympathetic was her joy, the consequences seemed likely to prove critical to the dignity of each.

On examination, Ralph found the injury done to the conveyance not great, and the horse manageable. He had luckily provided himself with cords, and other apparatus necessary, in case of accident, and after removing the beast from the harness, mounted him to return for his "plunder."

"I cannot well bring all we need, unless I leave you. I will be soon back. Are you afraid?"

"No," said she, looking about her fearfully.

"I shall be absent a half hour." He looked at Jeanie. He saw she was pale and in a tremor, and dismounted.

"Get on before me," he said. "Are you on?" Ralph leaped into the saddle, and with his arms about Jeanie, rode back to the spot where they had lunched. The horse rebelled at the proceeding, but by a pair of spurs put in use, was made to go forward. They had a merry ride. Deer bounded in the distance, and birds chirped in the branches, beneath which they brushed. Joy made their hearts merry, and not until their arrival, were they startled by anything unlooked for. But, much to their amusement, a flock of turkey-buzzards were holding a festal meeting over the remains of their meal, and so thick was the sable brood, it looked in the distance like an infant colony of blacks.

Now for a scatter!

Ralph imprudently fired upon them. With a simultaneous outcry, the birds took leave, not waiting for dessert or wine, but not without manifested hostility on the part of the mustang, who took umbrage at fire-arms. Fanciful and perilous were his steps—a style of dancing inconvenient to his riders. This exercise was especially obnoxious to Ralph, causing likewise discomfort to his beast, not only about his flanks, but severe friction about the mouth and ribs. Jeanie held on bravely, while her conductor dismounted with loud hurrahs.

The essentials were soon obtained, when, after filling his pockets with the remaining wine-bottles, he again turned towards the path for the buggy.

Repairs made, with more refreshment, Ralph (not forgetting Jeanie's coldness), seated her as ceremoniously as if a hundred spectators were by, to attest to his indifference to the matter.

The quadruped was now well disposed, which he mani-

fested by various motions, the chief of which were the graceful switches of his tail. Ralph did not forget his misconduct, and kept him well disciplined.

The last ten miles his driver grew more complacent, manifesting his returning good humor, by stopping to gather wild flowers for Jeanie, which became more plentiful in the latitude of the bay and live oak, around which the vine of the jasmine and honey-suckle climbed. He dressed his horse's head to please her, Jeanie meanwhile full of merriment and laughter.

"Now," said she, "I will take the reins to rest him, he looks so beautiful."

"You will scare the Dryades from the woods, with your furious speed. Give us a song, Euterpe."

"Agreed, if you will alight, turn Satyr, and reward me by a fantastic dance."

Ralph played with a flowering bush, showering over Jeanie's head the blossoms, who with her bonnet thrown back, joyously chirruped to the horse, and highly elated with her new employment, passed affectionate encomiums on Beauty's behaviour.

"I think," said Ralph, jocosely, "I can perform any miracles while you hold the ribbons, and then as soon arrive at the vale of Tempe." Leaning back he commenced a song, in which Jeanie merrily joined.

"Orpheus and Circe!" interrupted the bass. "Hear ye not, rocks and stones, O son of Calliope! By Apollo and the Muses—we have tamed one beast! Give me the strings, wood-nymph, unless you wish to see me turn into half-man and half-goat."

Still singing and laughing, Jeanie reluctantly resigned the reins to her companion, who had wearied of their slow progress. Heedless of her entreaties, he began to apply the whip, urging on the slow jogging animal.

"Oh! pray stop," urged the alarmed girl, who feared some new evidence of caprice.

"Just long enough, to take a drop of the grape, unless you have secretly quaffed it."

"I beg of you not to drink any more." Jeanie looked imploringly, as Ralph pulled from a valise his last bottle.

"Please don't 'play by the way,' Miss Miller, and behave more properly, than to interfere with my mode of refreshment. Your papa wished me to see you home—that is my sole business, and yours to see that I do it." Then putting aside Jeanie's hands, he (holding up the wine) sung :

"Tis when the fancy-stirring bowl
Doth wake its world of pleasure,
That glowing fancies gild the soul
And life's an endless treasure."

More impetuously than ever, he now drove onwards. Seeing Jeanie's alarm, he seemed inspired with the desire to tease and vex her, and with feigned indifference continued his music, now with pathos and sweetness, singing a love song of Moore's.

Agitated, Jeanie expostulated:

"Have you no pity for my fatigue, if you care not to alarm me?"

"Pity is akin to love :

"In vain you bid your captive live
While you the means of life deny."

"You will kill me, and the poor horse!"

"Have you no bribe to offer me ?

"There glides a step through the foliage thick,
And her cheek grows pale—and her heart beats quick,
There whispers a voice thro' the rustling leaves,
And her blush returns, and her bosom heaves."

"Is there no voice sweet trembler, thus potent in its power to thee? answer, and I will stop."

Jeanie burst into tears, refusing a reply.

Ralph slackened his pace. "Are you really alarmed?"

In vain her young admirer implored forgiveness, and apologized. Jeanie could not readily recover from her fright or wounded feelings. Wearyed to almost exhaustion, she looked with anxiety to the termination of their ride; her courage only sustained by the hope that each mile would be the last.

It had been a long and perilous drive, for two so young, to take in that uncultivated country. Stray negroes often crossed their path, looking to Jeanie fearful as they skulked and hid. Others with respectful mien passed them, with obeisance so friendly, that Jeanie could not but give them a smile in return, for the respectful "How-dy?"

Night was approaching. The heavens grew dark, from the sudden disappearance of the sun, now obscured by threatening clouds. Rattling thunder was heard, seemingly splitting the arch above, whence red lightning issued. Then came a pause. Ralph looked into the face of Jeanie, and laughingly told her not to fear, that the cloud was "passing over."

But Jeanie knew that it was not, but that its volume would soon be upon them, and that the storm would be very terrible. She felt this predicted in the atmosphere, which was full of dry heat, a sense of weariness being imparted by the heavy air. And she was right—Ralph knew that a tempest was brewing, and that it was not far distant. Pulling up the boot, he drew Jeanie farther within, and begged her not to be alarmed.

In quick gusts, the winds blew through the tree tops a wailing monotone, like that of the sea. Brushing around them, fell crackling branches; with stir and commotion, as if

in fear of some great Behemoth, the forest arrayed in solemn conclave, would roar dread opposition to its approach. Resistance was vain; the great Chimera, with his gusty breath, could not be stayed, and as if to make grander, more sublime its coming, Heaven's artillery with successive explosive booms, sounded its cannonade, as it were a last war-cry upon a sinful world.

Then, amidst the flash and thunder, came down the rain, beating an outpoured flood upon them.

Disguising his real terror, Ralph sung words of light and frivolous import, then with violent language, berated the storm, his blood meanwhile chilling, in the view of God's scathing power. Exposed beneath trees of gigantic height, some shrivelling into flames, lightning struck—they drove onwards.

"Have all the forgers of Jupiter's thunderbolts broke loose?" cried Ralph, "Heavens! I see no chance for protection?"

With this angry exclamation, he momentarily sheltered Jeanie, and with violent blows, caused his horse to plunge violently through the reeking forest.

"Are you afraid?"

"Only of you. God is in the storm and whirlwind. He can protect us. Oh! be not profane, in an hour like this."

"Forgive me, I forgot your timidity, but that the hurricane should come upon us, so near our journey's end, is enough to make one forsake his mother."

"Oh! do not call down upon us the wrath of Heaven."

"There is no fear with you on sea or land, so much piety can save us both. Great Vulcan! what a flash!"

As Ralph spoke, a quick report was heard, that seemed to shake the forest, the lightning glare revealing the face of Jeanie, white and death like.

"There is no cause for alarm," said Ralph, attempting to

laugh, "only you will turn into a mermaid. I had rather cross the river Styx, than this forest again with you, who seem born to be drowned!"

"Do not say that there is no danger—I know there is ; among all these high trees, but we cannot avert it—let us prepare to meet it—and do not be irreverent."

The storm seemed to louder howl—heavier to pour the rain.

"The seven phials will soon be upset," exclaimed Ralph, muttering his ill-luck ; in the same breath deplored amidst his category of tribulations, his failure in wine.

"Do not be so wicked—I implore of you !" said Jeanie, in a tone that checked his impatience and irritation, which were, unknown to her, aggravated by his potations.

"Are you not wet as when in the Mississippi, in a scollop shell with the immaculate Phil, whom you seem to venerate ?"

"I am very wet—we were in more danger, in far worse peril then, but your brother calmed, instead of terrifying me."

"That he is capable of doing—he has often calmed me, till I did not know whether I was a soft clam, or a fallen angel. You must have had a merry time with the deacon, more prose than poetry, I fancy. Poor little soaked bird ! I am afraid you haven't a dry feather.* Take my cloak, I can do without it. It is a pity I have not a drop to warm you with. Thank Heaven, we are not now far from our stopping-place."

As they made a turn upon the road, the path became wider, showing an outlet from the forest. The heavens suddenly grew lighter ; sunshine filled the atmosphere, making visible an old French town. Flowering trees were dripping with the rain, their gay colored blossoms emitting fragrance, as they fell plentifully to the earth. The china-

tree made the air sick with perfume, and around the old piazzas, lay crushed sweets, beat and tossed by the storm's peltings.

Before a large battened tenement, with spacious rooms, and a wide hall (in the South always a principal part of the dwelling), Ralph and Jeanie stopped, wet, cold and hungry. The house was uncarpeted, but filled with French relics, also foreign devices on the walls and chimney. An upper and lower piazza, extended across the front of the tenement—space and airiness seeming the chief attractive features of an inn, that looked cheerless and inhospitable.

They were met by a woman of quaint and singular appearance. Her dress was a short petticoat of blue, scarcely reaching below the knees of the wearer. Above the waist, she wore a bright jacket of red, which left bare her skinny arms and neck, the flesh of which looked dried and shrivelled. She was of a tawny yellow, rather than of the color of a negro. Her hair was short, straight, and black, and stood upright, leaving her bloodless face, with its peculiar features, fully exposed in their almost unearthly wildness of expression. She seemed jolly, exhibiting a set of dazzling teeth.

Opening wide the doors of a large vacant room, she flung on the hearth an arm ful of wood, soon making a comfortable blaze for the travellers. Seeing herself noticed, she became communicative, and bragged of her French origin, saying that folks called her "nigger," but that she had not a drop of black blood in her—that she came over in a ship with her master a hundred years ago ; and that her mother was a Creole, as pretty as any lady. Then showing an old ring on her gristly finger, she gave a leap in the air and out of the room with a bound, singing as she went a snatch of a French song.

Soon coming back, she disrobed Jeanie of her wet

trappings, which service done, before the latter was aware of the movement, pulled her as she would a baby on her lap ; and when Ralph Larkfield returned after seeking the inn-keeper, the yellow crone, in spite of entreaties, was rocking her back and forth violently, while she sung her a crazy lullaby.

“What are you about you tawny devil ?” said Ralph, as he heard Jeanie’s voice in terrified expostulation.

“Lola ride ye,” said the red-jacketed, while with Jeanie, she sprang up, as if on wires, balancing her with a see-saw motion in her arms, singing at the top of her voice, her old tune.

Springing like a tiger upon the half crazed but harmless Lola, Ralph sent her with a push against the side of the building, while he wrenched Jeanie from her bony grasp. Seated on the floor, her bare ankles crossed, she continued her song.

“What’s all this ?” said the master of the house in broken English. “Has the wild-cat broke loose, and come upon ye ?” at the same time shaking a cane over Lola’s head.

Lola muttered something about her “baby”—her arms swinging and rocking.

“She won’t hurt ye,” said the landlord, “I bought her for spry, she’s good at a jump, she is, and can out-run any nigger on the place on a heat. She never sleeps, and can wait on a gang of fellows, on a bust, the year round, she can ; and only needs a show, or a cock of my eye, to make her spring like a painter.”

“I should think so,” said Ralph, “but would like to see the hostess of this establishment, if you have any besides this one,” pointing to Lola.

“Well, stranger, she’s all I keeps—she is, and thar’s a heap in her if you only git her as I said, on the spring.

Why Mister, she was never out of jint since she was born—she's as limber as a young kitten, though she ain't young—very—we don't let her rust, either. There's nothing like keeping well iled; she ain't, you see, fleshy, but she's easy on the hinge—she is. Here, up gal, and show the stranger your motions. I knows niggers—I knows nothing but niggers." Saying which, the man gave the spry one a light flourish.

The wild-cat was roused, and with her long arms extended, her ochre-face grinning with a grimace, and her feet poised on the ends of her toes, she stood ready for orders, which being given her volubly, and with menacing gestures, she bounded across the room, and opening the door of one adjoining, showed that a blaze was there ready for the lady guest.

Once astir, as her master said, Lola was spry and useful. After setting the table for supper, with agile motions, she sprang from one piece of work to another, her eye all the while darting quick glances at her master, who continued his praise of her "easy motions."

But Jeanie observed, that with her nervous and restless activity, she grew quiet with his absence, and became less afraid of her, when she found that she was actually rational in preparation for their night's comfort.

"Come, pretty one," said she, "Lola won't hurt ye. She don't scratch kittens. I rocked ye, baby, kase dey took mine, my white baby—but I wan't so easy, so good on de spring, wid her. Come, pretty one, Lola won't hurt ye."

"Are you afraid?" said Ralph, laughing at Jeanie's timid look.

"Am I to sleep here?"

"Yes, Missy," said Lola, putting a low seat before the fire on the hearth, where stood a tub of water, and on the table some hot drink.

Jeanie followed. Tawny moved about like a puppet on wires ; first handling the blazing sticks as if they were fresh from the wood-pile, then flying to the outside door, where she helved at a log of lightwood, rekindling the fire till the illumination was more brilliant than twenty gas-burners. This done, she stood grinning at her exploit, then to Jeanie's amazement, put a bowl of water on the floor in the middle of the room, and after pulling at her hair, thrust her head into it, holding it up, seeming to delight in the trickling drops. But fancying she heard her master, she flung the water out the door, and commenced to beat up the bed, looking about her, as she did so, inquisitively, then continuing her kneading, as if she had a batch of biscuit under her fists. Her head dry, she pulled from under her apron a colored bandanna and some earrings, and after listening, wound it about her head, and put in the trinkets. She seemed pleased and laughed loud, while adorning herself. Seeing that Jeanie was amused with her, she crouched on the hearth, and pulled out of her bosom a tin box of snuff and a stick, which after thrusting into it, she began to rub her teeth with, (this Jeanie afterwards learned, was a custom with whites, as well as blacks, in the backwoods). The exhilaration of the weed set her chattering like a magpie. She examined Jeanie from head to foot, especially admiring her ornaments, and at every outburst of her admiration, would shut her form up like a jack-knife, unhinging with an explosive burst of merriment. No matter what her employment, she would break off, to thrust one of her bare feet into the fire, to kick over a log, or rekindle a stick, using them as if they were tongs. and with the same facility ; which being done, she would resume her squatting position, to spring up, if for nothing but to hop over a broom-stick and kick at the fire again. But amidst all her performances, Jeanie saw she was sly

hiding something about her person, sometimes sitting upon, then pulling it from under her, and secreting it behind her, then under the hearth rug, and if she heard a noise, running, looking back, while she hid it under the bed, or tried to tuck it into a crack in the uncarpeted floor. To Jeanie it seemed nothing but a bundle, tied up like a rag-baby.

"Where am I to find quarters, Gamboge?" said Ralph, coming to the open door.

"Do ye sleep?" said the yellow skinned. "Thar's where gemmens sleep," pointing across the hall, "in dat room—settin' round de tables, wid dere keards. Dere's where Lola sleeps, standing so." The liag poised herself. "I hab dat kind of sleep—I libs on de spring—I sleeps on de spring—and when I dies," the tawny grinned, "I goes to de heben on de spring." With this, Lola gave a bound, and cleared the doorway, hearing the whistle of her master. Coming back, she manifested to Ralph, that he was to follow her up stairs.

"No," said the young man, "give me a bed here, you Bedlamite, outside of the lady's room."

With Lola on the hearthstone, and Ralph near her, Jeanie slept quietly. No so the former; the excitement of the journey, the wine of which he had freely partaken, and the pain he had caused her, all combined to occasion feelings of restlessness. He felt that he had lost the respect of the sweet girl, whose favor was so highly prized.

Ralph Larkfield had, like others, a conscience, and it often smote him. As he laid down his head, to guard from danger the young sleeper within, he felt how much stronger and more dangerous were the foes from which she would guard him. He listened to know that all was safe with his charge, and upon a pile of blankets reposèd outside of her door. Finally, falling into a slumber, he dreamed the storm was

still raging, that Jeanie was struck by lightning, while over her the mulatto woman stood, ready to snatch her from his grasp. Then, the scene changing, on his fractious beast he seemed bounding over snakes, which lay thick as leaves in his path, while the mustang turned into a dragon, spouting flames and red wine. Amidst all, he saw the sweet reproachful eyes of Jeanie, saying, "Who will light me through the wood?"

Fairly awake, he listened, thinking he heard sounds of strnggling breathing : was it Jeanie ? He started to his feet, seized his pistol, and opened the door ajar. She was quiet as a sleeping infant. The sound came from the wake-
ful Lola. He watched her movements. She was crouching in the embers, her face lighted by a blaze which she would occasionally kick into vitality. Her form was bent double—her head over a broken skillet, where she seemed stirring a sooty mess, while she hugged in her arms her bundle of rags, for which she seemed preparing pap. In the meantime, she muttered to herself, "Lola feed baby—Lola feed baby," then rocking back and forth, appeared hushing a child. Hearing a noise, she jammed the rag bundle behind the fire log, and took her accustomed tip-toe attitude. Ralph was satisfied she was harmless, but insane. Still, he could not sleep, and watched her through the night. In the morning he ascertained her history, as the Frenchman related it. She was little tainted by negro blood, being the child of a quadroon, and her master, of whom he bought her. Her mother's freedom had been promised her, but not being secured to her previous to her owner's death, Lola was led to believe she had been wronged, and in consequence, with monomaniac delusion, threatened the life of her children ; they were therefore taken from her when infants. She was harmless, and only on this point deranged. The Frenchman related her story with great gusto, complimenting her with his usual

enthusiasm, upon her activity ; and, to do Lola justice, she was the only spry negro they met on their travels. The following morning, Jeanie and Ralph went into her kitchen, in which she was only a boarder, and that a transient one, as she ate on the doorstep, and slept as we have described—on the spring. But the domicil had other occupants, being inhabited by a number of families, and their descendants, besides litters of dogs and cats, hens and chickens, making free egress ; also the cow, as it might suit her convenience or pleasure. Among black pots, gridirons, washtubs, pig-troughs, and bread trays, squatted samples of small negroes, of different shades and patterns ; others swinging outside, and digging in the sand. Some of the smallest were rolling on the doorsteps, and some reversing their position with evident glee. Lola was alone active. While Jeanie looked in and around, she was edified with various performances, one of which was getting a heifer out from under the house. Lola was pulling at the tail and a hind leg of the animal, while the Frenchman stood at the other end of the beast, making ugly faces to scare him from his position. It was altogether a very sociable backyard.

CHAPTER XXIV.

SERENE and beautiful the morning dawned. A blue haze filled the atmosphere, making dreamily lovely the flowery landscape. The skies were cloudless, and the air full of balmy sweets. A breeze rustled the boughs of the broad-leaved magnolia, and scattered to the earth the pomegranate and oleander blossoms, the deep green of the orange shading the walks—thick flowering shrubs adding to the aromatic fragrance of the loftier verdure.

Jeanie was cheered by the influences of nature, and hopefully made preparations for their trip.

“I know you are ashamed of me,” she said, catching the humorous expression playing on the lip of Ralph, while she endeavored to smooth her disfigured apparel.

“The dress does not certainly enhance the charms of the wearer.”

And Ralph was right. Jeanie had never looked so badly—her pale, wearied face never needing so much the adornment of dress.

“But it is not of your habiliments that I would complain,” he continued.

“An insinuation!” Jeanie turned from the glass with a smile. “How do I displease you?”

“You have not one word of apology for your ill treatment yesterday.” Ralph played with the scarf about Jeanie’s neck. “Have you no token to give me by way of compromise to my injured feelings? Not even a glove or

ring? Here is one," taking hold of Jeanie's hand, "that will fit my little finger."

"No, no," replied Jeanie, with a slight blush, "for two reasons. I see no occasion for giving it to you, and besides, it is a gift."

"From the parson? Pray, what for? Did you peg him a night-cap?" Ralph laughed, shaking out before the glass his thick hair, and combing it with his fingers; then, while smoothing and pulling his whiskers and moustache, said: "His love must possess the genuine divine afflatus."

Returning, he begged again to see the ring, and that she would take it off. "Just for a keepsake, and a reward for all his trouble." Jeanie plead in vain. Ralph secured it, and playfully showed it to her on his finger.

"I cannot—why should I give it to you?"

"Ah, but you forget the snake! and the buzzards!" in a melo-dramatic air.

"When you terrified me out of my senses."

"Didn't I hold you, instead of allowing you to break your alabaster pedestal, young woman? and didn't I break a stiff-necked beast in your service?"

"Don't be nonsensical."

"And fed, warmed, and clothed you, fair damsel?"

"I know that you alarmed me dreadfully."

"And saved you from lightning and tempest?"

"Oh, pray cease. I cannot forget how wicked you were."

"And have not one word of forgiveness for such a penitent sinner?" said Ralph, falling on one knee, clasping the pretty hand which he attempted to kiss.

With a hasty withdrawal, Jeanie expressed her displeasure, when in a changed tone, full of earnestness, he said:

"Without mockery, I owe you an apology for all that displeased you yesterday."

"That you offended *me* is of small consideration," said

Jeanie, smiling. "Did you not ever read in the Bible, 'As he loved cursing, so let it come unto him ; as he delighted not in blessing, so let it be far from him ?' Is it not worse to offend Him who 'maketh the clouds His chariot : who walketh upon the wings of the wind,' as you do, when you make use of impious words ? If such terrible sublimity as we witnessed yesterday, cannot convince us of the power of the Almighty, what ever can ?"

"The fairest among women.' "

"Don't make such use of the Scriptures."

"I know that your words, Jeanie, are like 'apples of gold,' but they will prove like Sodom pippins, without your approbation. I should have liked to have been Jupiter, and quaffed ambrosia, without reproof from the lips of my goddess. Then you will not absolve me, after my humble confession, and give me this ring ? Is there no bribe that I can offer ?"

"Yes," said Jeanie, turning from the eyes fixed earnestly upon her. "Promise me you will not drink wine, or be profane any more. Your brother is not so reckless—would you not be like him ?"

"Wouldn't I like to be one of the holy Innocents ? Some day, if I promise, will the heart be added to the ring ?"

"Don't be so foolish—you will forget the little girl you travelled with"—

"Oh, Jeanie ! Our meeting has been a romantic one, and if any one on earth can make me resist temptation, it will be you. Supposing I was as good as Philip ?"

The tone in which this last query was uttered—the inquiry implied rather than spoken—the admiration and love breathed in the look, the words, were understood by Jeanie.

"There are few so good. You will have to change so much !"

"I would not marry a girl, well as I might love her," said Ralph, piqued, "who wished me to lose my identity, or turn into an apostle for her. She must love me with my faults, incorporating them with myself."

"I would not wish one to feel so towards me ; that is the reason I like to choose friends that I can respect. It is so difficult to be good, we need all the help we can obtain in example as well as precept."

"If you knew how I watched you last night, you would call me the prince of guardians. Such an asthma as I took, sleeping at your key-hole, pistol in hand, ready for glorious action ! Pray, Dulcinea, leave thy preaching, and pity thy Quixote, who stood a Gorgon at thy portal. Oh, Jeanie, how sweet you looked, contrasted with the old loon, rocking like a water craft at your feet. I would rather have the sword of Damocles over my head, than these cold looks."

"What a rattler !" said Jeanie, with playful remonstrance.

"So are snakes, from which I saved you at the peril of my influential life—remember that when 'we meet again.'"

Softly, beseechingly Jeanie laid her hand on the arm of Ralph, while she said :

"Do not speak of prophecies. I am half superstitious about them."

"No, dear Jeanie, I will not *now*, for we must be off to the boat."

The water was high, and the boat swiftly borne down the river.

It proved a pleasant trip—the society of Ralph hourly becoming to Jeanie more agreeable. Yet she trembled as she felt the bewitching spell, that caused her to linger with, and listen to one whose principles she condemned. But that she had forbidden, and he no longer spoke to her of his love, appeased her conscience, and she unreservedly enjoyed his presence.

CHAPTER XXV.

IT was night when they reached New Orleans. A new moon was shining in the heavens, figurative of the crescent outline, revealed by the lights on the shore.

The evening breeze blew refreshingly, courting Jeanie on deck, for a view, which made her head dizzy with thought. She was anxious to catch the first glimpse of the city of sunshine and flowers—dearly associated with her mother's home. The boat reached the levee—a moment to her full of agitation, joy and suspense. Amidst the hurrying, bustling crowd, she returned to the saloon, to await the movement of Ralph, who advised her to remain on board until morning. The interval was a relief. Strange it seemed to her that she should thus approach her mother's home. Not as she had expected, after a journey of pleasure and novelty, to bound to her arms, but after a long and perilous journey, with another protector, from another quarter.

Ralph had not told Jeanie of her father's declining health, and no one had imparted to her the news of his critical situation. Her spirits were therefore buoyed with hope and love. She was soon to find comparative rest.

Joyous, and inspiring, seemed her first view of this pleasure loving city of the South. The quays were crowded with merchandise. On the fashionable parade, women of every nation flutter their gay plumes and robes, floating like gorgeous insects in the tropical sunshine. Brilliant quadroons, with eyes soft and languishing—peering forth

from jetty locks of bird-winged beauty, sail by imperially, if yielding the walk to the highly bred Creole, in her simpler guise, and aristocratic loveliness. Here the Cuban damsel appears like a fire-fly from her tropic isle, and the French woman with her dainty foot, seems to scorn the pavement, with breezy-tread, an artiste in dress and coquetry.

Circe is here the enchantress, and the dandy flourishes his cane and glove, unreproved for idleness, though his morning and evening is spent at the domino and faro table. The stranger saunters on promenades more extensive, and pays his tribute of respect and veneration to spots and places, sacred from the associations of time. Among these, the Place d'Armes, attracts the citizen of the Old World, the religiously inclined seeking the Cathedral and churches, with their time stained walls, and foreign pictures and sculpture. People of all nations here find a congenial home ; the Spaniard his comrades, and his dark eyed señorita ; the Frenchman his café and the belle of his dreams ; and both, the fragrant coffee and perfumed weed, without which, to them, life is bereft of zest. Here all creeds and religions are respected ; and the Romanist and Protestant shake hands, differing in faith, while the freedom, ease and the *dolce far niente* found in a listless abandonment to luxury and idleness, is voluptuously enjoyed, without reproof from the active bustling merchant, whose search and aim is for the acquisition of gold.

Among the gayest, is Mrs. Miller. Alighting from her carriage, she ascends the steps of the St. Charles hotel. It was then a building chaste as a Turkish mosque by moonlight, and one of architectural beauty, as its dome glistened in the sun. It was the pride of New Orleans, and well deserved its reputation.

In its chief saloon, a long oval room of tasteful splendor, upon a central divan of golden threaded damask, sat the

mother of our wandering child. Her face was more colorless, but retained about the lips, and in the delicate flush occasionally seen on her cheek, the hue of health.

Her look was proud and impatient, as she wandered from mirror to mirror, sweeping her long dress over the carpet.

"There has been no such arrival, madam. The name of Cameron is not on the books."

"You are mistaken!" the lady said, imperiously, "look again."

The servant returned with the same reply, adding, "there has been one from Red River, a young lady; who has gone away in a carriage."

"Enough—of what age seems she?"

"A miss, and favors you, madam."

At the door of the parlor, the lady met several gentlemen, who arrested her progress. With forced gaiety, she parried some sallies with them, they crowding in her pathway as she proceeded—giving her hand to the constant Lawrence, and permission to him to enter her carriage.

With affected indifference, he expressed his acquiescence, and accepted a courtesy which he had never before enjoyed—a public acknowledgment of the lady's preference for him. The toleration of the beau Launcelot's civilities, was well known, also the lady's contempt for her accommodating squire, therefore, this movement, so partial and open, astounded the lookers-on, to the entire satisfaction of the favored individual.

But one who had observed ten minutes later, the worked, agonized features of the pale beauty, as she laid her hand upon the arm of her admirer, would have marvelled more at her expression, than the act. It certainly was not one of love or coquetry; Mr. Lawrence knew that the lady sought information; it was glory enough to him, that others knew

not the cause of her preference for him, also that he was driving with her in public, and at her request. He was all attention.

“Tell me,” said Mrs. Miller, “if my daughter is at the St. Charles; and with whom?”

“There is one Miller on the books,” replied the beau, “but I opine a damsel of no caste, a Red River girl, soaked, and hung out to dry. No people of our stamp, my lovely——”

“Mr. Lawrence,” Mrs. Miller interposed, angrily, “you will remember your limits, and on what conditions you receive my favor. It is enough, that I have lowered myself to serve my own ends to-day. Have you anything more to say of the young lady?”

“Nothing” (Mr. Lawrence removed his whiskers and person from such proximity as he had momentarily believed possible), “only that the young miss was not as destitute of good looks, as of millinery.”

“Anything further, Mr. Lawrence?”

“That I took cognizance of her countenance, as she went into the hall, and discovered her to be comely and well formed. I inquired if she came alone, thinking she might find me available as an escort, in her ignorance. She had a bizarre appearance, madam, and was not of our constellation.”

With suppressed indignation, Mrs. Miller still queried, while secretly believing her child was kept from her by stratagem. “Tell me all you can gather of her movements, and the world shall believe we are friends. Your vanity shall be fully satisfied.”

“I have not called, madam, upon the blade, but have intended privately, to know more of the young miss.”

“How does the man look?”

“A fellow of incipient beard,” Mr. Lawrence went into

ambush behind his own, leering like a yellow fox out of a thicket, "innocuous, madam, pulchritude indifferent."

"I wish you would be less magnificent."

"I am, madam, eternally, and without end, in your service. I can assure you no female ever escaped my observation, that was so fortunate as to fall in my by-paths. I have a way of seeming blind, madam :" Mr. Lawrence gave a lynx-eyed glance out of his fur, "but," opening upon her a pair of inflated lack-lustre orbs, then closing them with a squint, "I see."

"I have no further need of you," said Mrs. Miller ; "you can leave me here."

"Not until I have given you the *Sacramentum* of a man of honor——"

"Be brief—the horses are restive." The carriage stopped.

"It will be impossible for me, while I still remain in incertitude respecting my destiny."

"I understand you ;" then to the servant, "Drive on!"

"You show your most extraordinary talents, madam, in the management of your body politic, of which I have the honor to be a most obsequious member." Mr. Lawrence spread himself to his most inflated extent, as they entered a public square, where stood coteries of gentlemen ; and as the carriage stopped before a palatial looking building, he remained for the space of three minutes with his hair and face brushing, seemingly, that of the lady ; while his stout ale-filled body, conspicuously supported itself on the arm of her seat.

It was a tableau he would have enjoyed as a spectator. He was gratified to know that others had that pleasure, while callous to the epithet which escaped the lips curling with contempt : "Incorrigible fool!"

Mrs. Miller is in her sumptuous home, where she lives alone, feeding on her miserable thoughts. For five weary years she has sought to keep down every wave of emotion that welled up from the depths of her fervid nature, and to live on ambition's spoils. Her laurels are yet green—fragrant with fresh perfume from every censer—her beauty yet in its prime—her brow fair and smooth, her rich locks bright as when they shaded a cheek less white.

The morning light might exhibit less lustre, when within her chamber, an expression of woe clouded and distorted her features ; but in the evening's fervid glare, with the studious arrangment of drapery, how radiant and lovely she still was ! The cynosure of her brilliant circle, such as her wit, talent and beauty drew about her, it would seem she might have been happy as such vain mortals are. But Elinor Miller by nature was formed for higher, ennobling purposes. Bred to believe that power was wealth, wealth the source of happiness, happiness bought by popularity, and popularity only attained by the immolation of the heart and principles—she made the sacrifice for the homage of a world. Sickened by the adulation that came not from a source respected, she turned in vain for the sympathy she craved. Hoping for it in her daughter, with feverish impatience she listened to the tale of her existence, but half-crediting the rumors that reached her, while believing that arts were resorted to, to steal her from her.

To sail triumphantly on the sea of public favor, Elinor Miller knew she must be sustained by influence. Cast off by her husband, she had lost her moorings, and found it critical to steer her barque, without shipwreck of that reputation she valued.

Thus the proud aspirant added haughtiness to her dignity, making her condescension but the more acceptable for its rarity. Lovers she had, more she might have had,

in the gay metropolis she had chosen for her home, who would have filled her car of victory, flushing her cheek with triumph, to the sacrifice of many a loving heart. Husbands and plighted ones were in her train, worshipping her bright intellect, content to catch the scintillations as they sparkled from her lip, feeding meanwhile upon her lustrous beauty. The scholar forgot the pages of his lore, to read in her eyes a tale of sweeter import—the poet his dreams of beauty in the bright reality—the orator his glorious theme, in the song from her syren tongue ; while philosophers, men of science, aye ! even “men of God,” in that gay city forgot their vocation, to listen to her winning voice, and enjoy the inspiring presence of one so beautiful and gifted.

This homage brought to her heart no peace. Her standard among men despised her. The only man she loved scorned her preference, and bade her seek her husband.

In her hours of solitude she remembered the humiliation. But this was not all the wormwood in her cup. She believed that the rumor of Jeanie’s loss had been a ruse, that every engine was set to work to deprive her of her child, and that when the period came—the impending crisis, that was to determine her choice of a home, she had been torn from her and secreted.

She imagined that Mr. Hamlin had united with her husband, in a project to defeat her ends. After the first blow occasioned by the news of Jeanie’s fate, she gradually awoke to this belief—belief rendered certain by confirmation from her mother, who had written her, that her child’s “loss,” was all a concerted plot.

The letter from Mr. Cameron, she thought to be prompted by Jeanie, who determining to escape from their toils, had induced her protector to divulge the secret of her existence.

Believing her in the city, she was now exploring its hotels, while Jeanie in her absence, was in her mother's home.

How tasteful was each decoration ! How the very atmosphere breathed of her luxurious parent ! Ralph had left her, and alone she counted the moments that passed. Hearing a carriage, a step in the hall, with a bound, Jeanie flew to the door, and to her arms.

Wearied with her search, Mrs. Miller had returned ; and like one distraught, gazed upon her child. Drawing her head to her bosom, with deep tenderness, she said :

" You are all mine—mine henceforth, my Jeanie—not a lineament—not a look reminds me of him who would separate us. Promise never to leave me. We will be sisters, rather than parent and child. How like we are !" comparing herself with Jeanie in the glass. Her eyes were now only fixed upon her face. Suddenly the faded and worn apparel of her daughter, struck her in contrast with her own.

" And has he so abused you, as to dress you like a pauper ! What desecration of your beauty ! And but for the love you had for your fond mother, you would have been buried in those dreadful woods ?"

" Oh, dear mamma—I cannot talk of all that has made me so destitute—never, never allude to it. Papa loves to speak of my resemblance to you."

Nervously Mrs. Miller turned the subject. Arm in arm, the two walked back and forth, the former almost devouring in her eager gaze the child she looked upon, as if not long to be her own. Drawing Jeanie to an ottoman at her feet, from her hair she took the comb that confined it.

" Let me see the length and luxuriance of these golden locks, and the style of arrangement which will best suit you, so that Zaidee can dress them artistically. Let the mass fall over your shoulders. How redundant !"

The fashionable mother, shook in her fingers the fleecy folds, and dropped them, holding from her the form of Jeanie—gazing on the youthful face, till its spirit-like beauty entranced her, as might one of Raffaele's pictures. “How sweet the task will be to dress you.” A shower of kisses pressed the eyes and lips of Jeanie.

“Walk across the room, my love, and let me see if you have the tournure, so essential to a lady. Too simple yet—require cultivation. I must remodel you. It is marvellous that those country people have not made you more like them. Poor little demure Jane! Is she as properly behaved as ever?” Mrs. Miller laughed sarcastically.

“Aunt Jane is lady-like.”

“Don’t say, Aunt Jane, longer, *ma mignonne*; she is not a relative you know. Such appellatives are rustic. You will now drop all intercourse with these Seldens.”

The tears came to Jeanie’s eyes.

“You have too much sensibility, I must be very tender with my sweet dove. For a while you will be secluded, until you have apparel befitting my daughter, when I shall admit you, at least, to the vestibule of my court. You will not come on the tapis as a debutante until next season.”

“It is sufficient to be once more with you. I have so much to talk of—so much to tell you, I shall care for nothing else—so much that involves our own happiness.”

“What pretty garland are you weaving with your silver words?”

“I wish I could twine one encircling all the dear ones I love,” said Jeanie, her head falling on her mother’s hand.

“This is very sweet and sentimental, fairy, but I have done with Lalla Rookh. You shall feed like a humming bird in my bower, but must never bring sober realities before me.”

With these words, the mother and her child parted for the night.

"It is all a delusion," hope whispered to Jeanie, "that separates my dear parents. I shall be the bond of union —the peace-maker between them." Then the thought of the divorce came over her memory. Her work must not be delayed.

CHAPTER XXVI.

BRIGHT and cheerful hours passed in Jeanie's new home, where novelty and her mother's society afforded daily food for entertainment. But a rainy day came, and a rainier night. Mrs. Miller resolved to pass it in the sole society of her child whom she would more completely win. But in vain were all arts to draw Jeanie from her reverie.

"Papa is very lonely and sad," she said at last.

"The moods of your father, Jeanie, must no longer concern you—we are separated from him now."

"Did you never love him?"

Flushing scarlet, then growing pale, Mrs. Miller said :

"Never repeat the question."

"Dearest mother," Jeanie's head fell on the lap of her to whom she spoke. "Papa is very miserable ; he looks pale and haggard. I cannot but feel that the sweet affection you bestow upon me, would be as precious to him. He thinks that you do not care for him, and would rather stay in New Orleans and be gay, than to make him happy. But," Jeanie's face kindled, "I know it is not so. I know that for one you loved, you could make any sacrifice. I know, too, that one was never made so sweet and beautiful to cause wretchedness. You do not speak ; did you ever think that I was, perhaps, sent you by Heaven, to bring you to dear papa ? Look upon him once, as you do sometimes upon me, and he will not believe you hate him."

"Jeanie—I will not deceive you—I never cared for your father. Yet, but for his treatment of me, I might have been other than I am. Ask him if he remembers the night we parted. But that is over now. Since then, I have worshipped genius. Yes, I could have loved one kindred to my nature; but I sold myself for gold. He asked for the affection he bestowed, I had it not for him. He wished me to live a *Darby and Joan* life, I revolted. He is right; he could not forgive contempt, though he might injuries. Do you know Mr. Hamlin?"

The smile that lighted Jeanie's face, the tears that dropped on her mother's hand, showed how much feeling the question awakened.

"Oh, yes, he is so like one's dreams of excellence. I know he wishes you would again live with papa."

"I do not believe it. It is a ruse to deceive your father. He knows me better, and that I shall yet be relieved from my fetters."

"Dear mamma, he is a Christian. Ought not he to think the marriage rite should be held sacred?"

"Did he ever speak of me to you?"

"Yes."

"With what expression? in what manner?"

"Sadly—once he grieved me by the look and tone with which he said, 'You are like your mother dancing.'"

"Yes. I can see him, and hear his severe sarcastic tones. I almost hate him."

"Do not say so."

"How strange that at times he should so much remind me of my old friend, Hugh," said Mrs. Miller, in half soliloquy. "Yet as unlike as an iceberg and volcano. He must use some philtre to gain his influence. To defeat him one must oppose sorcery to sorcery. I talk strangely to you, child, but this man is of no common mould. How

cold is his metallic nature ; like polished steel he glitters, and pierces with his dagger thrusts. Bah! he would re-marry me to your father! Would he enact the priest?"

"I do not find you in poverty, as Grandma Castleman said. Is she much in need?"

"Did she make you believe this? Jeanie, your father is no niggard. He was ever generous with his purse, and has been liberal to her."

"Oh, such a load is off my mind—it is sweet to hear you speak so of him. He grieved me in his treatment of her."

"He has no reason to love her, more than he has your mother. I would do my worst enemy justice. Your father has a noble heart ; but I could not feign for him regard I did not feel, nor disguise my contempt for his birth and low connections."

"Think rather of his character, mamma, of his integrity. Does he not, at least, merit kindness from you?"

"Hush! hush! Jeanie, this is a forbidden topic ; to-morrow you must devote to your apparel ; and when arrayed, I will exhibit you to my friends. You will appear at my reunions. I long to see you dance again. We shall go often to the opera, that you may be amused till you become accustomed to the change in your life. This young gentleman, Mr. Larkfield, is a half brother of Mr. Hamlin. Is he like him?"

"Oh, no."

"Why does my little daughter blush? Has he made himself so agreeable, that his name causes emotion? Well, I shall not be jealous. We must send for him to dine with us, when you are more presentable ; do you not love me?"

"You do not know how much!"

"Never, then, speak to me of your papa. Don't shed tears so easily; you must learn self-control. Kiss me, love.

To-morrow we will amuse ourselves, and talk less. I must have a dancing party purposely for you. I shall order an exquisite ball dress for the occasion. How I long to bring you out."

" You wish to make me happy, but it will take a little while for us to understand each other," said Jeanie. " I do like to dance, and find the amusement so pleasurable, that I fear a frequent indulgence of the enjoyment would dissipate my mind, and make conversation and thought distasteful. No, dear mamma, I would not now worship the goddess of the dance, as I did as a child."

" Why, pray what would you do in a party? At your age, you do not play; music, hired performers can furnish, and a soirée is no place for a debating club."

" Constant excitement does not seem to me to be essential to enjoyment. When I go into society I do not mean to be always seen like a puppet upon the floor. The love of harmony and music delights me, but in my soberer moments, I think it is wrong to spend hours enjoying such a senseless whirl; and weak, to be so enthusiastic as some in the pleasure they manifest in the exercise. I do not say that I will never dance; but I would not like to join any Terpsichorean clique for a winter's diversion."

" Where did you learn such nonsense, child? But it matters little; you can disguise your ultra notions and seem pleased, until you discard them."

" Would not this be duplicity, if I were to endeavor to conceal my sentiments? I should be acting, if I did not speak, a lie. It would be beautiful," Jeanie spoke with childish fervor, as if sure of sympathy, " to be able to keep one's mind free from even the dust of falsehood, so that we could be read, and read ourselves, as plainly as we see our faces in a glass. I have known people try to quibble and cover up what they really believed, when they did it so

badly, it made one think of the effort to get wholly under a too small bed-blanket—the more you stretched it one way, the shorter it grew the other. Then it must be so inconvenient to prevaricate," continued Jeanie, laughing, "as much trouble as to make 'patch,' which the more you eke and block, the larger it grows, and the bigger the holes to fill up ; and after all, what is it but a piece of colored gingerbread work, not half so pretty and pure as the white original."

"A nice moral essay ; but if there are people I abhor, it is your plain speakers; a highly bred person will never thrust his principles into your face, but like the skillful mechanic dovetail his notions with yours, so that when parting no feeling but one of harmony exists."

"And so nicely, dear mamma, that you cannot tell which your own are. It does not seem to me to be rude to declare one's sentiments because they offend the world : I should as soon think one ought to quarrel with the light of the sun because it gives pain to weak eyes. If the soul is really illumined by a pure conscience, it can't help shining—can it, mamma ?"

"Your casuistry is too contracted for me, and I fear it will require some time to eradicate your bigoted notions ; but they will not last long in association with liberal minded people."

"I do not fear, while with you, that I shall become lax in my notions of right and wrong. I know I fall miserably short of my purpose, but I do aim, and pray for some abiding principles, and that I may act upon them."

"Really, you make me laugh—the odor of your sanctity, my sweet, is overpowering ; in what school of ethics did you graduate ? I am afraid with such judging, I shall be found wanting."

Not awaiting Jeanie's reply, Mrs. Miller skillfully changed the subject, and according to her own theory, oiled her argu-

ments, while she combated the opinions of her child. Every jest was a *jeu d'esprit*—and every graceful simile used to make fairy-like the pictures she drew, but a coruscation from her bright but perverted mind. Like the sparkling surge of crested waves, her thoughts beautifully capped each other, but unconsciously with instinctive discernment her youthful listener perceived the vacuity of the brilliant foam. She felt that she might revel in the element that overflowed her heart with the gushings of a mother's love, and bathe her soul in the sweet waters, but that henceforth a seal was upon her lips. Her brain pictures wore no rose tints, as she withdrew from the beguiling presence—over them a fog had arisen ; yet out of the windows of her soul she looked, praying that the mist would roll away.

Was she "prematurely old"—and had her heart experience taught her to think too deeply—was it more natural and winning to sip the silver dew, and kiss from the rose leaf its perfume, instead of making a science and a study of nature ; and more lovely for one so young to bask in eternal sunshine, with no thought of a future, instead of seeking "bugbear doctrines and creeds," which would make her ascetic and gloomy as a "grim bigoted theologian?" So said the sweet advocate, to whose voice it was music to listen. Must she also garble her language, to make it plausible and attractive, and lie sleeping on beds of roses, among the beautiful shadows of dream-land, driving far away the stern realities her conscience taught her she was bound by the decrees of a Higher statute to seek and turn to her soul's good ?

Darkness obscured the bright light which had illumined her coming. She had no philosophy to prevail against the rising throbs which choked her, as her spirit murmured, "We are still apart." Her mother noted the soft eclipse, but not the hue or depth of the shadow.

CHAPTER XXVII.

WHEN Ralph Larkfield last saw Jeanie, he had parted from her after a wearisome journey, when her personal attractions had deteriorated from the trials and sufferings consequent upon the incidents of her travels. He met her in the midst of a circle at her mother's home ; among whom as usual, the hostess shone preëminent.

Amidst the fashionable crowd, he looked eagerly for Jeanie. Wandering over the grounds, his eye was now attracted to a young girl dressed in white, and although changed by the recovery of her health, and her tasteful apparel, he recognized his charmer of the forest. Upon her head, around which her hair was dressed classically, lay a garland of leaves, arranged with seeming carelessness, but with studied effect.

“Dress her like a child, yet artistically as a queen,” said the ambitious mother, who, unlike many so much admired, was not jealous of the softer, more touching beauty of a younger face, and that her daughter’s. Her dress was worn with a sash floating at the waist, the band upon her shoulders clasped with strings of pearls. She was surrounded by gentlemen who eagerly sought to see the daughter of one so attractive, but many turned from her disappointed.

As well might they have expected a gemmule from her lily wreath, or a pearl from her bosom’s ornament to have dazzled and sparkled, as that she should have been noted

for brilliancy in that festal crowd. The simple Jeanie emitted no lustrous rays, and to some seemed in her cold repose, as she stood in the quivering shade, unmoved as a sculptured ornament.

Luxuriating in a mother's love, her heart deceived with the affectionate words which baffled not her sanguine hopes, she grew each hour more tranquilly lovely.

Mrs. Miller had resolved to wholly win her child from her husband, and with policy indulged Jeanie's conscientious scruples, intending that she should not be shocked by change of customs or manners from her northern home, until she gradually became reconciled to the more licensed freedom of New Orleans life. She therefore accompanied her to church, and for a while relinquished her usual Sunday dinner party, and refrained from her entertainment, the opera, on that sacred night. She finally spoke kindly of her father, and when she saw how deeply Jeanie was touched by the remembrance, she considered her false words a cheap bestowal for the prize she coveted.

In the meantime the credulous girl fed on the hallucination that she had softened the prejudices of her mother. The introduction of her daughter to her circle of friends, was a moment of triumph to Mrs. Miller, and she determined not to suffer mortification in the defeat of her project, and to finally carry her abroad where she, in future, intended to make her home.

She attempted no longer to combat the prejudices of Jeanie, as she called them, against her billiard room and card saloons, where gaming was carried on by both sexes, and for a while stoically refused to participate in the amusement of betting, of which she was extravagantly fond. Tonight at her brilliant ball, she had resolved by stratagem to make her retiring daughter conspicuous; and not until she had been fairly noted, would she allow her to leave her side,

where like a morning bud, she nestled under the shadow of the perfect rose.

But her solicitude vanished, when she witnessed the admiration she created, though the charm she brought with her presence was not electric, like that which had animated every tongue, and enchain'd every eye, when she had made her debut on the world's stage.

But a softer, sweeter power was Jeanie's, if not exercised by the spell of wondrous beauty. Yet unsophisticated, she sickened with the adulation of strangers, and welcomed Ralph with such animation as she had not before exhibited. Tired of the gay rooms, she was readily persuaded to seek the piazza and grounds, in view of the same mystical stars, where the young lover had first been captivated.

Freedom from restraint restored her vivacity, and the gushing, glad-toned laugh, which Ralph ever loved to awaken. The bright sally and gay repartee, the thrilling presence, absorbing to each—the happiness unutterable and unspoken, enchain'd them oft in silence, was born of that blissful re-union.

The conversation became finally lower and more serious. Many were the labyrinths where they wandered. In the garden of roses Ralph laid sweet blossoms in the hair of his idol, and under the vines lingered with her, sometimes whispering words causing her to thrill and tremble, then lost in reverie, he would fancy his love returned, and that in her eyes he read acceptance of his suit.

Ralph's smile which acted like a charm upon every one, was to-night bewildering in its power to Jeanie. It seemed not as usual to flash like sudden light upon blue waters, but as if the gladness within imparted to it irresistible sweetness. She read passion and devotion in every glance of his eye, and love in every intonation of his rich voice. Yet Ralph Larkfield's wooing bore not the character of senti-

mentality, for the laughing jest ever mingled with the deep fervor of his warmest declarations. So gay was his general bearing, that one within hearing would have supposed his conversation of the lightest import. In abandonment to the enjoyment of the hour, he drew Jeanie far from the crowd, and caught with lover-like devotion the slightest whisper from her lips—she trembling with love and the doubts of a warning conscience.

The party hitherto so dull to her was now charming. The vain parent was gratified when she again met her child, to see her cheek brightened, and the warm flush of happiness irradiating her pensive face. Unconscious of the passing moments the two roved in and out of the rooms, promenading the halls, and off the grounds until they were, in spirit, alone.

“You see the ring—it has proved a talisman. Is not my probation ended?”

“So soon, Ralph?”

“Have you yet no faith?”

Jeanie shrank timidly from the encircling arm, concealed behind the pillar near where they sat.

“One may be bewildered and fascinated (her eyes fell, and her voice was almost inaudible), and yet not dare to trust the heart to love.”

“Is not the resistance too late? Did I not prophesy we should meet, and will you add, but to part? Would we were again in that crazy old wood, so full of romantic adventure! Can it be you are the girl who *cried* because I was about to leave you, and who would now quarrel with, and have me pistolled for endeavoring to substantiate my claims?” Ralph curled his lip reproachfully.

“How I wish you could read all I must conceal, for the lack of words to clothe my hopes and wishes for you.”

“Is this all? What an angel you would be but for so much caution.”

“Is it not better to know well one to whom we give the heart’s first faith, than to repent and—separate for want of congeniality ?”

“Jeanie, purest—sweetest one, we are congenial. You know you can make me all you wish.”

“I cannot influence you.”

“Do you consider it such a Sisyphus task to attempt my reformation ?”

“It is not one for me, were I equal to it. If you have no higher motive to be conscientious than my regard, it will avail you little.”

Pearly drops glittered on the brown lashes that drooped.

“Am I such a reprobate ? then convert me, Jeanie :

“Thou shalt kneel at Allah’s shrine,
And I at any God’s for thine.””

“Ralph, those words are impious.”

“Jeanie, I am no hypocrite, I have no sympathy with your religious feelings ; and, if you were mine, I would be jealous of yours. I believe in living a fast life, and a merry one. I would have all your devotion—all your worship. I could not part with so much as a glance.” Ralph’s eyes gleamed with passion while he held the little hands he rapturously kissed. “You shall be, too, the sole object of mine, and to obtain you I will dare any power. Come within.” Jeanie rose speechless with apprehension. The walk led within denser shrubbery. Clasping her resisting form, he murmured : “What bliss—what love do I care for, but thee ! for you I would imperil my soul, and cast out Heaven.”

“Go—leave me,” said Jeanie with agitation. “Never speak to me again of love. I have ‘chosen Him whom I will serve,’ and will never wed one irreverent and profane.

You neither respect me, nor yourself." With haughty pride the lover stood alone.

"If such is your estimation of me, I here bid you farewell, and should I go to the Prince of all Evil, my ruin will rest upon your head."

Trembling with anger, Ralph Larkfield parted with Jeanie.

News soon came to Mrs. Miller that her daughter had left the garden, and gone to her chamber ill.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

AFTER the news of Jeanie's safety reached the good people at the farm, the change that there occurred was like the transition from a night of wintry gloom, to a gladsome summer morning.

Old Grandpa Selden no longer hugged Jeanie's little lamb that bled in his arms, while the tears rolled down his furrowed cheeks; and grandma gave up sobbing in secret places, but resumed her knitting and refilled her snuff-box—at each tap of its aromatic contents, fervently as of old, ejaculating her blessings on the "little dear."

Good old folks! how they laid their heads together, and cried for joy, when they heard of her preservation. Not for one moment did she seem forgotten. The deacon never rubbed a beautiful red cheeked apple, but he laid it upon the giant clock, thinking Jeanie might come to eat it; and gave up cracking hickory nuts at night, because she was not at home to help pick them; but instead talked (to himself if there was no one by) of the summer days when she would come back. He planted seeds in the little pots of dirt, where she grew tiny rose trees and mignonette; and put sticks around the little bird's myrtled grave. Grandma occupied herself nursing straggling geranium shoots and stone-crop roots, making Jane leave her most engrossing employment, to choose the prettiest spot for her morning-glories, though there was no prospect for months of the vanishing of the snow.

The latter was deeply afflicted with the news of Mr Miller's critical state of health, and much distressed at Jeanie's absence from him.

Keturah had never wholly given up Jeanie—her spirit of hopefulness encouraged her, amidst the sorrowful wailings of the family, though she was sometimes seen to go off by herself, and with a kitten of Jeanie's, put her head in her lap and cry. But if observed, she would complain that she had "eaten too much," and that it was "enough to kill a pig to live in such a doleful house."

Zebedee was too selfish to think much of any case in which he was not the sufferer, and was heard to insinuate, that "drowning was nothing like one of his poor turns." But if he was jealous when he believed her lost, he was more so when the rumor came that she was living. The joy evinced was distracting to him: it was too cold to go out of doors, and he complained that the hullabaloo the old folks made deafened him—that he groaned with the tooth-ache and nobody cared—that he talked of his pains from crown to toe, and nobody listened—he asked Jane for drugs, and she gave him molasses, Keturah for toast and she spread him a plaster—that he shivered and quaked with vain efforts for sympathy.

But he soon had consolation. Mr. Miller was dangerously ill. Somebody was afflicted, and some one that Jane liked, nearer his end than himself.

As for himself, he was treated so "unhandsomely," he resolved to be independent of favors and live on the avails of future prospects. In the opinion of Keturah he was "beside himself," and who had a better right to the position, no one else allowing him the same propinquity?

Jane went to New York to see the invalid, when soon after, Zebedee's business fever rose to an alarming crisis. He packed, and unpacked his trunk—he wrote her piles of

letters, which he never mailed, and went as far as the depot to follow her daily. Concluding that he was an abused and trampled individual, he determined to take care of his own infirmities, and in the chimney corner, seek the society of Keturah, who had treated him with more deference since Jane left. Keturah was too fond of company not to prefer Mr. Flint to the cat, and felt secretly flattered that since the absence of his favorite, the bachelor had looked at her wonderingly, as she flew from one piece of work to another, and that he had once called her "smart as mustard." The love of praise was Keturah's weakness ; when she lacked it from others, she bestowed it upon herself, and for some unknown reason, did not as formerly, hustle Zbedee out of the ashes. She became more patient with him in all save his complaints ; those she closed with a quick shutting of her mouth, like the click of a steel-clasp. She began to treat him much as she might a stray dog, that had won her good graces, and on whom she suddenly spared the broomstick, tenderly acknowledging that there might be "worse cattle than Mr. Flint." She felt proud of his addresses, as a man of family—she knew that he was "spleeny and tarnal humbly," but still a "ketch."

She now put sugar in the warming pan, with which she smoked his bed, and though privately insinuating that he was as "cross as an armful of cats," she threw away a new pair of shoes, that she had bought for their squeak, on account of his nerves.

Grandma thought Keturah was "getting religion," such a change came over her, but was sorry to find that in the conversation she heard between her and the "orphan," that it bore on lottery tickets. He must go to New York, but his trunk must be packed which Jane arranged so nicely when he went to Mad River. Keturah advised him to have

his coat-tails made less "flipperty flapperty," thus interposing another obstacle to the movement in the mind of the man of deliberate habits.

Zebedee was a number of weeks in preparation—with his doors closed, rummaging closets and crannies, saying nothing to any one excepting to Keturah. Grandma was a good deal disturbed with the "sly goings on," to all of which Zebedee only chuckled, talking to Keturah, while she made cheese or skimmed milk in the pantries. Miss Sprunt now rarely sung the *Siege of Bellisle*.

It was a tableau to see the bachelor astride of a high stool, his feet hanging with a neglected looseness, on which he wore shoes, revealing between them and the hem of his broad-cloth, a "break of blue." His eyes, which were large and protruding, had now an expectant look. Keturah was busy in the cheese room, where she handled and tossed the commodity, as if each was a small slapjack (and there were twenty of them), while at each "whop over" and each "smack down" of the golden moons, she give them a clap with a hand, which lacked neither size nor strength. Her foot kept time on the painted floor, with well directed and uniform stamps, telling not only of the energy of each motion, but that she was well shod. Her cheeks were glowing rosy red with the exercise that had kept her employed since four in the morning—her whole buxom frame glowing, panting, expanding, with each muscular movement; the *tout ensemble* suggesting the idea of a brisk young mare on the full trot.

Laziness and industry were contrasted in the two, as if one was waiting for "the world to come," to see the turn of fortune's wheel; the other, as if each day of labor brought her mines of wealth, instead of a good appetite, and three meals a day.

"Well, Mr. Flint, when do you start?" said she.

"How can I without Jane?"

"Jane! Jane! as if nobody could sugar your mess, or bile your pot, but Jane. Do you think the puddin's goin to stir itself, or this cheese is goin' to dry, without I whop it? You oughter have a woman what can put vitals inter you." Keturah turned another cheese, giving another stamp.

"If it wasn't for my weaknesses."

"Lummikins! I wish there wasn't such a thing as a back stick, and its my opinion, if you'd limber yourn, it would disappear."

"How you do twist about, Keturah."

"Why don't you show folks you ain't such a good for nothing, as they take you for?"

"What's the use of being in a hurry! It tires me to see you work so—do set down and be clever. I may have the tin some day—then I shan't live in such a mean way."

"How much do you expect to draw?" Keturah leaned over a cheese, on which her elbows rested, her round chin supported on a secure foundation.

"It's uncertain."

"Well, if you duz slip up, what's your next cue! or do you mean to stick to the kind o' bisness you're in?"

"I don't know! I suppose I shall be provided for. You know, Keturah, I can't get married on the little end of nothing. I mean to consult Jane."

"Jane agin! what a couple you'd make. Why you'd, both on you, go to sleep over your victuals. Just hear me, Mr. Zebedee Flint." Keturah stood up, with her hands on her broad hips. "I would get some grit inter the family, some way, if I married a woman that would knead me black and blue."

"Keturah, you are so aggravating. My business ain't a suffering. I'd go South if it wasn't for bilers, and boats fill-

ing with snags, besides niggers them countries is infested with. I wish I could be in a relaxing climate."

"Blazes—you'd be flattened into a dish rag."

"Ain't you going to make bread? My feet are cold. Come down into the kitchen and I'll tell you my prospects. I can't be frittering away my time so."

"Well, your nose is blue now. I guess you'd better be off, getting that money."

"I do hate to risk myself on a railroad."

"Get along ahead," going down the stairway, "or I'll pitch you, if you meddle with my apron strings there behind. Marry Miss Jane! what a feeble existence you'd live together."

"I'm afraid I couldn't be happy with a woman any way, they are so interfering."

"You happy! you blue-legged infidel. What do you suppose a woman is going to marry you for? just as if she'd change her condition for insignificance. Don't you s'pose she wants something to lean on, that's a staff in protection—something to feed on in disaster and loneliness—a man what is a man, not a failin' sheep? But I'm sure it's none of my concern what you marry."

"Sometimes I feel as if I could put up with a woman, and then again, as if I couldn't. I lay awake nights thinking what a miserable object I be, and then I think I'll offer myself right off; but I ought to marry a small woman. How much do you weigh, Keturah?"

"A leetle more in brains, I tell you, Mr. Flint, than your whole miserable body. Jane Selden won't have you. She ain't a going to mix up with such an unfortunit."

Keturah was now up to her elbows in dough, which she was kneading fiercely.

"You ain't so clever as you was in the cheese room. I do like to see you work. You've got the smart in you.

You ain't so delicate as Jane, but you are a great deal tougher."

"And you are a trifle greener, if you think to come over the Sprunts with that kind of juice. You think my hands is all flour; but if you don't look out nudgin, I'll make you of the same 'gredient. Will you please to tell me which you are about to spark; me, or the experienced Miss Jane?"

The entrance of grandma into the kitchen started Zebedee off from the table, where he had seated himself by the bread-tray, his head and hands not in the dough, but down so near it, where Keturah's were working red and fast, that it was dubious which accomplished the kneading.

"Here's your stockings," looking first at Keturah, then at the bachelor.

"Well, I shall want 'em in the morning; I'm going in the cars."

"You'll look up Jane?"

Zebedee grew red. The bread in the oven, Keturah was permitted to pack his clothes, which she handled, not as formerly, but gently, as if each article was a jelly-bag. It was refreshing to their owner to see a female holding in her arms a pile of his stockings, and to observe how feelingly she knelt to his beloved garments, putting up powders and salves as if they were rose and bergamot.

The bachelor melted at the spectacle. "You know it won't be long," said he, "before I shall make some woman agreeable to me. If it wasn't for the encouragement I've given people, I might make different arrangements."

"Circumstances alters cases, Mr. Flint. Where's your flannels, red and yellow, and your pots of mustard? You'll look fine, callin' for them delicacies—your shoe-blacking—there's no use payin' for sich jobs."

"I can give 'em a rub after I get to bed—"

"Well, I do hope you'll behave as if you come from some pint of the civilized arth, and not show up your verdancy. Hand your yarn socks. I wish I could go long, and see to you, but if you'd only listen to anybody that's experienced, you wouldn't go round blunderin' like a blind pig. Well to begin, them heads in the shop winders ain't cut off of folks, and stuffed, they are patterns for gettin' up improvements in women ; but you'll be greener about some other things—when you get located, don't go hollerin' round the entries for somethin' to eat, just pull a string in the wall, and a native will come up strait as a bucket on a well-pole ; and don't try to borrow any of them carriages in the streets, them belongs to niggers ; and of all things, do as soon as you land, get some kind of new fashioned trowsers—them Bets makes don't compare with York tailoring—and keep your legs out of sight all you can, they are so mean—I wish you could, shut up your mouth a leetle grain at the corners, but I suppose you can't more than I can this old foxy trunk's—it's so full it will bust, as sure as it's nail hobbed. I'll haul it to, while you stand on't, Mr. Flint."

"It sometimes 'pears, Keturah, as if you hadn't any kind of feelin'. You hoist, and it will come smack."

"I tell you, man alive, the feller what sparks me has got to be up and doin'. Hurry along, and don't get under my feet. There's no use in percrastinatin'—you'll start in season."

"You know Keturah, we can't tell what a day will bring forth——"

"Well I ruther think it will bring you and your despikable spine out o' bed when the car whistles."

"Hadn't I better sleep as I be, so I needn't get out o' breath?"

"I don't care if you turn in, in your talleder shoes, so you don't disgrace the family by being shiftless."

"So Zeb, you're goin' in earnest?" said grandpa, putting his head into the door.

"Well, it don't signify," interposed grandma outside, "the world is full of changes."

"I spose so—Keturah is in for it," groaned Zebedee.

"You know I never dallies; what I duz, I duz, and now I've undertook with Mr. Flint, I'll put him through."

The bachelor concluded he would retire early, a resolution causing him to remain in the easy position he assumed after Keturah left him to get tea—his face momentarily lengthening until the latitude of his mouth was hardly observable in the longitude of his countenance. The old folks were much excited by his decision, and by his secret business.

As the sun in his chariot of gold, appeared in sight over the grand old hills of Berkshire—a dipped tallow candle was seen emitting a smoky feeble light, coming down Deacon Selden's back stair-way. Its bearer's energetic step was unmistakable, as it clattered through the cold entries and passages to Mr. Flint's room, followed by loud knuckle-raps, every one producing terror and anguish to the roused individual within.

"D'yé hear? Get up I say——"

"Stop your thunderin', do, Keturah, I've just tho't neighbor Sanborn is goin' to kill to day——"

"The critters can wait I guess, if they can't I'll stick 'em—come along out, now, I say."

"I can't find my shoes—I do hate to part with the old folks."

"Yes, the cow loves the hay-stack—get along up, I say, and go long to York, and get your dues."

In the space of half an hour Zebedee issued forth in a new overcoat, which Betsey had just sent home, unfortunately tight and short. He was, however, in it—the compression, and the view of his yellow haired trunk on a wheelbarrow at the door, producing unpleasant sensations.

It was ten years since he had left the farm, excepting to go to Mad River. He swallowed the lumps as they came up in his throat, and coaxed his legs after him, which seemed to have lost the power of volition. How cold the snow looked ! and how melancholy sounded the steam escaping in the distance.

He drank his coffee and eat his breakfast, occasionally looking at Keturah with brine in his eyes, to which melting symptom she seemed insensible.

“Just fifteen minutes,” said she, looking up at the monitor.

A solemn sight it was to the inexperienced traveller, to see the old folks in their night caps, bidding him good-bye through a crack, and very irritating to witness Mink’s comfortable state of repose, who had not yet left his post.

“Your time is up, come on—bring along your sticks, Mr. Flint.”

“Well, I’m a coming—don’t hurry so !”

Puffing and blowing, Zebedee and Keturah reached the cars, the wheelbarrow following.

“You get in, I’ll buy your ticket.”

“That fellow has run off with my trunk !”

“Here’s your recommend, don’t break your neck—buy me a silk gown, and come back, for the land’s sake, in some kind o’ business, and in anything but a coffin.”

“Didn’t I tell you so !” said Keturah to the wheelbarrow propeller, as she caught a view of Zebedee’s head protruding from the cars, “Mr. Flint only wants regeneratin.”

It was a cold frosty morning for the bachelor to travel, it made his nose look bluer, his shamble legs more clumsy, as he serambled with break-neck haste into the cars, from an unnecessary impetus, considering he was not a barrel of potatoes to be rolled into a cellar. Altogether, he had a bewildered expression, as he bounded on and off of sleeping people, with the motion of the cars under full headway.

But feeling an innate consciousness, that he was embarking "on a new and successful tide," self respect crept over him, and but for his tight coat, he would have seemed in easy circumstances.

Being invited in from the window by the conductor, he put a japanned box under the seat, also a new hat tied in white paper, and began to survey his location; and his probable chances for safety and companionship. He observed the dimensions of a fat Quaker lady beside him, and was glad to feel that in case of accident, she would be safe to fall upon. Meaning to look out for pick-pockets, he kept his hands at first mostly behind him, on a dried bladder, in which his money was tied.

Matters would have gone smoothly with the traveller, but as the morning advanced, he grew hungry; when he exhibited the poor taste to spread his lunch on the top of his new beaver, the odor of which became offensive to the obese lady, who was anxious lest her neat brown shawl should suffer from contact with cold sausage and baked apple. The time arrived, when he became in need of water.

"Dost thou wish something to allay thy thirst, friend," said the Quakeress, "if so, thou can be furnished with all that will suit thy body's refreshment, in the next car, where thou wilt be afforded more room for thyself and provisions."

"He can't have any out of that pump," said a listener behind, "that's all that works the engine."

"Let him that is athirst drink, which Scriptural passage, applieth to the body, as well as the soul, friend. Thou wilt become rumpled in thy attire, with a person of my magnitude in propinquity to thee," said the lady, growing more disgusted with her companion.

"You'll be warmer where you are, and won't be so jolted," interposed the joker.

"Thou art officious, friend ; stretching of the limbs, and sufficient room for their expansion, is essential to the traveller."

"Pickerel !" exclaimed Zebedee, "I was just a feeling if I had any."

"If thou wilt wheel thyself about, thou canst be extricated without difficulty."

An attempt was made, but in the effort, a spark flew into the eye of the bachelor.

"Get up ! Up I say !" he now vociferated, at the same time throwing back his head, while he held open the afflicted organ : "it's a shuck, or a cob of something—get it out, old woman ! get it out, I say !"

"Canst thou not wait, friend, until I can turn, without injury to my apparel ?"

"It's a stickin' me ! It's awful ! Let me up ! let me out ! you old—old meal bag !"

"Friend, thy wrath is unbecoming, and betrays a mind undisciplined. If thou wilt contract thyself into smaller dimensions, I will endeavor to probe thy wound, and extricate thee from thy agony."

Without waiting for a period to these remarks, Zebedee bestowed upon his companion homely anathemas, with which he associated a variety of farming utensils, at the same time working himself upwards—his face steaming with the pain and discomfort, when a traveller performed the surgical aid required.

Mr. Flint was now anxious for a release, and with many angular contortions, and with much compression of the corpulence beside him, he obtained one, and landed outside of the female bulwark.

Much to his satisfaction, he was soon regaled with lemonade and confectionery, of which he bought plentifully, also many other things on the way, such as small pies, maple

sugar, shell baskets, books, etc., all of which were precarious and bulky for transportation or storage in the cars.

Nevertheless, he was much gratified with his journey, especially with the society on board, who seemed pleased with him, and on arrival, oppressed with politeness. So many invitations as he had to ride (cumbersome as he looked with his hand luggage), all of which he could not accept, being disposed of *nolens volens*, with six others, including the Quakeress, in a small coach.

It was a happy moment when he reached the "tavern" he talked of ; and a merry one for the passengers, when he shook hands with the friendly lady in parting.

That he was in New York, Zebedee felt the next morning to the distraction of his weak nerves, he having put up at a fashionable hotel, from which he issued early (after the payment of a huge bill), to find Jane Selden. Strange to him, no one knew who she was, and though he discovered a great variety of Janes, to whom he was directed, he suffered much in the contemplation of their countenances—disappointment aggravated by the loss of his money-skin, while drinking a mug of beer with a new acquaintance. It was a refreshing moment to the bachelor, when, weary and hungry, he found himself in the presence of one who had been the El Dorado of his hopes, until her memory had been overshadowed by her enterprising successor.

Jane was visiting a friend, who seemed backward in accepting his boisterous greeting—coldness unperceived by the visitor. How sweetly the patient Jane listened to the threadbare topic of his anticipated success in business, of all his sufferings, bodily and mental, since she left the farm, and the finale, the inconsiderate and inhuman behavior of Keturah. After a conference with her hostess, she proposed to him to bring his trunk, and follow immediately to her place of sojourn.

Mr. Flint accepted the invitation conditionally—he must have a key to the door of his bed-room, and an assurance that no one should “pry” into “his affairs.”

He accordingly came, but to Jane’s mortification and surprise, she discovered the following morning that he had departed secretly, leaving signs of a lunch. Jane endeavored to screen her farm friend, and might have saved his reputation for eccentricity from exposure, but unfortunately he returned at night, in a situation in which he was never before seen, wandering in his mind—light-headedness, manifested by throwing about loose change, and calling himself a lottery ticket.

On investigation of his case, she discovered that he had received the avails of a small prize in a lottery drawn in Baltimore, and that by a system of hocus-pocus had been defrauded of his winnings, while liberally expending his resources in an oyster saloon, with a circle to whom he had been presented at the agent’s office.

Horror-stricken at the course and immorality of the luckless bachelor, it was with little satisfaction that his faithful friend received a full length daguerreotype of himself.

When in his right state of mind, she severely expressed her disapproval of his mode of acquiring money, and felt none the less grieved when he expressed that he was utterly ruined in his prospects, and should become a “miserable object,” unless he could make up his mind to “share” himself with some woman, who would give up the world, for his prospects, “poverty and the tomb,” an introduction which prepared Jane for a low-spirited proposal of marriage, to which she returned a kind, but unconditional refusal.

In despair, and out of business, Mr. Flint subsequently left for the farm, after squeezing into the japanned box, from which he had taken crumbs of edibles, a red calico, instead of the silk gown he had promised Keturah.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

JEANIE had entered upon a new life. Carried rapidly from one scene to another, before aware of the change, she was in her mother's wake, and, like her parent, conspicuous as an object of criticism and homage. While conscious that her heart was not absorbed with the vanities of a career so brilliant, to please the latter, she unresistingly appeared in public, trusting that by her acquiescence she could thus more effectually exercise the power she would exert. But suddenly the veil fell from her eyes, when she discovered she had been thus led, that she might be prepared for a more extensive arena on a foreign soil.

Meantime, Ralph Larkfield, who had sent to New York frivolous excuses for his absence, lingered in New Orleans, where he abandoned himself as of old to pleasure, and spending his time chiefly at the gay abode of Mrs. Miller.

For a while coolness existed between him and Jeanie, but the lover did not sigh penitently in vain. She was finally persuasively won to the belief that his irreverent language proceeded from thoughtlessness rather than lack of moral principle.

Mr. Miller had been so long an invalid, Jeanie had not imagined his case a critical one, and receiving but brief accounts of his state of health, was cheered by the hope of his recovery. Her mother had secretly given the impression that she was made unhappy by accounts of her father's illness, which caused the discontinuance of intelligence upon the

matter. The sick man resolved, if spared, to meet her once more, though with little hope that he should live longer than to reach New Orleans.

With such anticipations, letters came to Jeanie less frequently, until her heart grew sad with anxiety. She marvelled at the silence of Mr. Hamlin, who had not written to her as she had hoped he would do. Yet she was compelled to remain silent, and to seem amused with the efforts made to entertain her.

"You do not put your soul into your voice, my love," was a complaint which Mrs. Miller frequently made. "You lack joyousness, my Jeanie. How different was your promise as a child! Endeavor to become gay—to-morrow we have dinner company."

"It is Sunday, dear mamma. Did you know that a letter sealed with black came for you this morning?"

"Yes, it is in my escritoir. I shall not open it until Monday. Here is one I received from your grandmother a few weeks since. I have not read it—you can do so, if you choose." Jeanie perused the following:

New York, Lord's Day Eve.

MY SWEET ELINOR:

From my abode of penury I address you, that you may know that I yet hover about you. I continue in a precarious state, but able to dine and sup occasionally with our bounteous friends, who grant me many small favors. It may not occasion you surprise to hear that the low-bred person whose name you bear, is dead; he was buried yesterday, with great funeral and military honors. I heard the fife and drum from where I crib, and was inspired to tattoo a beat with my feet on the occasion. Write me if you shall go into deep black, and if I am remembered in his will—if not, I presume you will make the sum good. The kettle your Uncle Tom left me was of no use, as toddy don't agree with me, as it did with him. Life is so uncertain! as your poor father used to say!

The Selden family have given up all hopes of catching Mr. Miller

for poor weasled up Jane. She has put up with him in New York, ever since you left him in his disgrace. The old maid has hung up her fiddle, and intends to marry their hired man, and go to Erin with him—a melancholy end.

There have been great robberies in the city, and I have been obliged to send my valuables—you know their intrinsic worth—to the garrets of my friends. I am grieved to hear that your child is incarcerated in a convent in your State, and there is no hopes of her liberation. Wouldn't it be well to petition Congress? Arthur, that dreadful boy, is going to ruin fast, and has been dismissed by a tailoress whom he expected to marry. She had heard of his principles and low birth. I am faint, owing to eating nothing (I never sleep) for a week. I seldom have any fire, and not being in good flesh, I feel the changes—but when my father and mother forsake me the Lord will take me up. Your poverty-stricken parent,

ANGELINE C., relict of P. C.

P. S.—Will you be so benevolent as to contribute a small sum to a contribution about being started by the ladies of the church to which I belong, for my relief? The plate will be handed around next Sunday. It is got up by the eleemosynaries.

A. C., R. of P. C.

With a face portraying her shocked feelings, Jeanie laid aside the epistle of her grandmother, whose character she now understood. As she finished, she caught the smile of her parent, who jestingly asked if she had been entertained.

“To resume, our conversation,” said the latter, “we dine so late that church services will not be interfered with. I shall expect you to be present, so remember, my jewel, you will cause me pain by dampening the enjoyment of my guests, by any long faces engraved for the occasion. However I may feel, I never betray myself in company. You must learn self-control, my daughter.”

“This is not the self-control Aunt Jane taught me. The Bible says: ‘he that ruleth his spirit is stronger than he

that taketh a city.' I have made a covenant with the Lord, that I will 'keep holy the Sabbath day,' would you have me break it, my dear mother?"

"We will wait until to-morrow, my love, for your sermon. I do not wish you conspicuous, but *au fait*. Your dinner dress has come, also some pretty evening apparel. With suitable arrangement of your hair, you will be quite an ornament to the occasion. Apropos, my love, let me see how the dinner robe becomes you. Tell Zaidee to put it on, and then return to me. It is so early in the day we shall have no visitors."

Jeanie passively obeyed. She found a mulatto woman holding up for her own observation, a party dress of costly fabric. Its hue, a brilliant rose color, delighted the servant.

"Missey dis be superb—it jus done come. Lor how magnificent Missus be in her 'spences! She be gwine to make little princess out o' Miss Jinny."

"Mamma wishes me to put it on; Zaidee, will you fasten it for me?"

"Pray, Miss Jinny, for de sake ob family spectability, don do such vulgarity bout holping yerself. He! he! if dis chil ain't done got her dess off, afore I shake out de tail! come to de glass, where we see its rosy shine."

"Please be quick, Zaidee, and don't stand admiring it too long."

"You be too much, I clar, for any nigger Miss Jinny! che! che! I rudder look at you dan all de angel out ob heben, wid dat celestible dress on. It s'prise my sense, dat you don laff more sensible bout it. How de gemmen will lub you, so like misses only she wear her manwoon welwet. I wish de dinner party come week time 'stead o' Sabber da. I hab so much to occuper my searce momens wid dessing har, and de gospel serbices, but people ob color no bisness meddlin' wid dere souls—don spose dey got much."

"Then you go to church, Zaidee?"

"Yes Missey, but I take short perusal ob de exercises, and comes home to dess missis' har; de Scripture say long har, be glory to white folks. San Peter must know how more delightful long braids is dan short."

The comical expression of Zaidee's face, as she solemnized her countenance, caused Jeanie to break into one of her old laughs, which was welcome music to her mother, and took the heart of the servant.

"Miss Jinny, you sartain be the comicalist chile," Zaidee laid down her head to chuckle. "I din know how pretty your teef was fore, dey laff so sociably."

"My dear love," said Mrs. Miller, coming from her dressing room, "I am glad to know you are so joyous; you are then pleased with my taste. You are quite perfect. We must have tableaux for you, to teach you to display your numerous graces. There is nothing like knowing how to exercise one's powers."

"I clar I dunno which be de mos young, and most splendid."

"You must do your prettiest, to-morrow for us both," turning to the maid, "we shall be taken for sisters, only I fear as one of my scholastic friends would say, the daughter is '*matre pulchra filia pulchrior*.' How like we are! Let me see your foot Jeanie—*petite*—good instep—the Castlemans all have it. How like a fairy you dance, pray where did you become so accomplished in the Motus art, but we might as well ask how the birds sing. Polk a little, my bird, or waltz, Zaidee will give us music."

Jeanie consented. Zaidee's melody was inspiring, and though her heart was aching with anxiety, she commenced a polka with her mother.

"There is hardly room here, I wish to practise a new dance with you. It is quite delightful with such a partner." Mrs. Miller pirouetted and glided about the room, then

returning, placed a wreath of pink and silver, on Jeanie's head. "Now fancy me our *cher ami* Larkfield, and give me your prettiest steps. You must not treat him so cavalierly, he is a little dashing, but the more amusing—come into the drawing room my love; follow, Zaidee."

"Mamma, I feel sad to-day, but if you wish it, I will oblige you." Pensively, she passed down the stair-case, her waist encircled by the arm of her mother. They entered the drawing room, commencing a waltz. Jeanie's cheek flushed with the exercise, as she sped the giddy whirl, with seeming thoughtless merriment. As if the dancer's step kept time to no other beat than the tawny foot—the ear listened to no other sound than the negro melody.

The anxiety attending the situation of her father, the revelation of her mother's want of principle, and the conflict that her mind endured in its love and solicitude for Ralph, all tended to cloud her native joyousness. "Oh, were it God's will," her spirit murmured, the elastic form still moving, "I could be content to know that these heart throbs were to be now forever stilled, rather than pass a life in such senseless folly."

At the early hour of eleven, in the gay ball dress—the glittering wreath upon her head, paling in its hue the warm cheek it contrasted, she looked worldly and volatile as her mother. While thus occupied, a visitor had unexpectedly come upon them. How changed the situation of each since they had parted, in the flooding perilous waves! How unlike was the beautiful gaily adorned sylph to Mr. Hamlin, with her bright color and flower garlanded brow, to the pale, almost speechless girl, he left clinging to her frail support, appealing to her God.

Mr. Hamlin had heard much of Jeanie, and of the admiration she had excited, *éclat* increased by her reputed wealth. The rumor also of her engagement to Ralph, had been currently reported, his intimacy in the family verifying the tale.

He had, he believed, calmed the excitement of feeling, the news first occasioned him ; and with resolution purposed to advance the happiness of two in whose fate he felt so deep an interest. But to-day, he had come on an errand to Jeanie, overwhelming in its import. Lightness and frivolity even forsook the matron. She commanded her nerves, and with self-possession met the visitor. Mr. Hamlin returned her salutation coldly, his eye resting upon her now agitated child.

Radiant and beautiful she looked to him with her heightened color, her red lips and the quick breathing of her panting form. Her dance had ceased, but still he seemed to see her whirling, whirling ; to what goal ? her mother's destiny ? Better, he felt, she had sunk beneath the flood.

Could it be Jeanie ? her father dying, and she robed in gayest flower tints, practising for a ball with her worldly mother, who would render her insensible to his situation.

Transfixed, she caught the eye of him whose glance had inspired her with such whole-souled confidence. When a little child, she had shrunk from the condemnation it conveyed: again it had melted her with its power; but now his earnest afflicting gaze was crushing and ominous.

“ Jeanie !” he said, in low, impressive tones, bringing to her memory those upon the river, “ we have lived to meet again.” He approached, fearing to clasp her, as when he tore her from the wreck; for now she seemed to him in danger of one more appalling. He did not fold her in his arms, as once he might have done. She was no longer the child, the simple Jeanie; but as she stood in her gay dress, she seemed to his prejudiced eye, but a type of her false, giddy parent.

Jeanie read in the glance, intelligence of evil, and standing before him, with her hands clasped, exclaimed :

“ Have you come from dear papa ? is he worse ?” Her rose-tinted cheeks grew white, and her slender fingers bloodless, as she caught his hand.

"Yes, and would see his child; he is failing fast, we fear, and cannot survive many days. He is at the St. Charles. I have come for you. But," looking upon her dress, "you are hardly ready."

The intelligence and reproach conveyed, caused Jeanie to sink trembling upon a sofa, each moment growing faint, until her aspect awakened the attention of her mother.

"The news has killed her," said Mrs. Miller, folding her daughter in her arms, then laying her head upon a pillow. Turning to Mr. Hamlin, she said:

"Will you go into the ante-room; I will presently see you there;" then to Zaidee, "this dress will be ruined."

"Have you no care for the heart within the shining robe?" were words that came, though unuttered, to the lips of the visitor, as he rose to obey.

"Oh! do not leave me," said Jeanie, reviving. "I must talk to you, alone; no one else loves my dying father."

"Be brief, then, my daughter," said Mrs. Miller, impatiently; "it is the last conference I shall allow upon this subject." Mrs. Miller went to her private reception room.

Left with Jeanie, whose colorless face and expression told her sufferings, Mr. Hamlin seated himself beside the sofa, avoiding even a touch of the little pale hand that lay near him.

"I was cruel, Jeanie, to be so abrupt," said he; "but had I met you otherwise, I might have more reasonably feared the shock this painful news has given you: I came to obtain the permission of your mother to go to him: she cannot refuse so near his death."

"Why has no one written me of his condition?"

"He was informed that such reports marred your enjoyment."

"Who said this? Oh! Mr. Hamlin, do not lose your confidence in me, because I seem so heartless!"

"You did not, then, direct the message, my dear girl!"

nor, perhaps, detain Ralph from his return North? I need not ask you, that blush tells the tale. You did not know the importance of his presence at this time in the last settlement of affairs, and we cannot blame you."

"Perhaps, I kept him, but I did not intend to."

"Say no more, Jeanie. Love is more potent, sometimes, than money. Why are you so agitated? have I intruded?"

Mr. Hamlin's manner was suddenly cold and reserved.

"Don't speak of me. I would hear of dear papa, and go to him immediately."

"I will see your mother." His eyes fell upon her fingers heavy with jewels. He glanced at them hastily. The simple ring, he gave her, was not there.

"So she values my token. Have I been so weak as to think she, a child to me in years, would keep it?" The murmur was a silent one, yet Jeanie saw the inquiring look.

"I have given it to Ralph. Do not ask why I did it." Her cheek reddened.

"That is unnecessary." A forced smile passed over the stern lip.

"It was not that I did not value it." Jeanie detained the speaker by a movement of her hand. Shrinking from the touch, the fingers were dropped, as if carelessly.

"The act explains it: it is a trifling matter." Turning, he sought Mrs. Miller, and found her awaiting him.

"Is Jeanie better?" said she.

"Yes, she has finally learned the truth respecting her father. Has she your permission to accompany me? It will be a final parting."

"No: his scheme shall be frustrated. She is henceforth separated from those who would alienate her from me."

"Madam, you are cruelly treating Jeanie."

"By what authority, sir, do you presume to dictate to me my duty, or censure my acts?"

The haughty woman now avoided the eyes that rested upon her.

"By that of a dying parent. Would you add the last drop of agony to his cup? would you strike the death-blow to every hope?" As Mr. Hamlin spoke, a storm cloud gathered upon his brow, until his forehead corrugated with intense feeling. For the first time, he nearly approached her. Taking her by the arm, with vehement utterance, he said :

"Elinor! will you pile up, sin upon sin, until you add death to misery—causing grief to all who ever have lived you?"

What was there in those earnest tones, in that deep voice as it for the first time called her maiden name, that impressed her?

"Will you let her go?

"No—not to him who discarded her mother; and would now take from me the only being who loves me. Why would you, too, make me more miserable, you who seem to wake the dead in my memory; and so often bring Hugh Shelbourne to life."

"Who told you that Hugh Shelbourne was dead?"

"What do you know of him? because you sometimes seem to wear his lineaments, sometimes bring him back to my imagination, think not that you are like him—no, he never would have thus treated me; but from his grave, would almost leap to resent my wrongs."

"Who told you he was dead?"

"I have known it for years, first from the tongue of Mr. Lawrence."

"With a smile of derision, Mr. Hamlin said: "One that ever loved you, would most desire your good. It is no kindness to embitter your feelings against your husband; and to make miserable your only child. The hour may come, when you will wish you had sought his forgiveness. But it is of

Jeanie I would now speak, she must go to her father—tomorrow he may not be among the living."

"We have dinner company then ; and I must show my daughter to expectant friends. Pardon me, but you exaggerate the illness of Mr. Miller. You will excuse me if I drop this conversation. She is very happy now, Ralph can tell you this ; we are engaged for a masquerade, on Wednesday next ; it will disappoint your brother, should she be absent."

"You will not compel her to go, by persuading her that my report is false ?"

"I will show the world that we are heedless of the existence of the man, whom I have long since ceased to call my husband ; and if Jeanie is not now as indifferent to him, she soon shall be !"

"Wednesday her father may be dead."

"A blessed day to her mother."

"Have you no heart left ?"

"Did ever I possess one ? you believe it not."

"I have little reason to think you ever displayed its faith ; but of this, let those complain, who have suffered. I feel that God and His ministering angels guard your child ; and that the arrow of death will be stayed, that her father may embrace her ; and, furthermore," Mr. Hamlin now drew nearer Mrs. Miller, while his eye steadily regarded her : "I have vowed, also, to bring you to him, with the permission of an overruling Providence."

"That is a decision to be derided. Why do you care to unite us in the hour of death ?" Mrs. Miller softened, feeling the influence of a nature she had long vainly resisted. "Would you have me go to him a hypocrite ?"

"No, it is enough that you enacted that part as a bride ; I would not have you thus cloaked at the bed of death."

"Would the stain of falsehood then pass from the brow of the widowed?"

With excitement quivering in every nerve, Elinor Miller asked of the stern man she secretly loved, a question he could not misunderstand.

"I have ever pitied as well as condemned you. Your presence could not long console him. You say that he cast you off; but is there not another mightier, who will cast off all but His chosen ones? The earthly and the Heavenly, both may say, 'Ye knew your duty, but ye did it not.' Do you relent, and give me Jeanie?"

"No, I am resolute."

Mr. Hamlin walked into the adjoining room to bid farewell to the daughter. He found her weeping. "We are denied. What shall I say to your father for you?" With her head buried in her hands, Jeanie sobbed audibly. Mr. Hamlin was agonized with the spectacle; he forgot all but the object of his tenderness and sympathy. Leaning forward, he took hold of the hands that lay concealed beneath her face, "What shall I say to him? You cannot go."

"I knew it would be so. Tell him I am with him in spirit; that my prayers will not cease for him; that if I am not permitted to close his eyes in death, I may open mine with his on the resurrection morn. Oh! tell him," Jeanie's voice trembled, while the hand that rested upon the silken hair gently caressed it, "that I once did him cruel wrong: I believe it now."

"I understand you, Jeanie."

"Poor papa! How blest he is to have you with him."

Lifting her head, the smile that came across her face was like that when on the waters. Lost to all memories but those of hours when she had been so dear, he forgot that she was not, as then, the angel of his future hopes.

"I will deliver your words," he said; "continue to trust

in the Lamb that was slain; for He is mighty to deliver. When bereft of an earthly parent, you will not be left fatherless." The parting made, Mr. Hamlin passed outward. The mother went to her daughter.

"Poor chile," said Zaidee, who came at the call of her mistress; "she car more for her ole par, dan for her buful robe tail. Miss Jenny surprise me wid her uncommon way, Missis. She hab no sensible feelin' like Missis, for her splendid clobes—faintin' in her luster gown!"

"My dear one!" addressing Jeanie, "these feelings may be impressible at first, but I cannot allow you to indulge them. That your childish heart may be at rest, you shall be permitted, should your father become worse, to write him a farewell letter; but one thing I shall never again allow, another private interview with Mr. Hamlin. There is too much cant and humbug sentiment between you."

"Do you not like Mr. Hamlin?"

"Well enough. Be a good girl, and obey my wishes, and you shall have every indulgence. You may go to church to-morrow morning. Towards evening, you can attend to the duties of your toilette. I cannot be disappointed in your appearance at the table. It is quite a matter of pride with me. Consumption is a lingering complaint; by the way, Mrs. Castleman has been evaporating for many years, and your papa may outlive us all. Zaidee, come and see how your young mistress is looming up! See! what a color! don't let your beautiful hair be tumbled by this unnecessary excitement."

"Miss Jinny make me tink of the vilets, so blue and pale dis-day. I dunno see de red cheek misses talk 'bout, mabby she got 'em 'widstandin'. Niggers hab no eyes half de time. I was brung up to see de way Missis see: so I reckon, she hab got red cheek. I see somebody at the window—a small brack individual."

"Who?" Jeanie languidly inquired.

"Che, che! Miss Jinny; him ain't no peoples, dey call him monkees. Come see him. It sinful to cry so 'bout dis old man; but 'spose white folks' custom to dere faders; dunno, niggers don' hab none enny 'count; dey kindir mix popper-lation, and make theysels inconvenience findin' dere ancestor. Dis rappin' gown hab seen a heap o' trouble. Misses wear it in her griebing times."

"Does mamma ever cry?"

"Oh, Lor' save us! Miss Jinny, she be berry trouble-some when she hab her season ob grief. Zaidee ain't no 'count, enny way. She jus' cober up and holler like a disciple o' Satan. She hab mos' distressid fits ob griebe I eber tended; lass one misses hab I gub her up to de Magdalen ob souls, and spend de ebenin' wid select weception ob people ob color."

"Please be quiet now, Zaidee, and hand me my Bible."

"I can't missy, on no 'count. Missis tell me to put such solemtys 'way till you get ober your distressid periods. She hab no 'pinion you spile your buful eyes. She be gone see Mar's Lawrence, a big gemmen wid big fisker."

Jeanie dismissed the servant with a shudder at the last intelligence.

"You will not be fatherless," were the comforting words of Mr. Hamlin, as he left her. Still and calm she lay, her features bereft of color, in converse with her God. The consolation of His word was deprived her, but she was left the privilege of prayer. A fervent petition went up from her lips, that she might see her father yet on earth. Memory furnished her passages from Holy writ, that swelled her bosom with confidence and rapture. She tried to image him on his dying bed, preparing for his heavenly flight. She drew forth his picture, which she wore on her bosom, and imagined the original pale in death.

How beautiful, how transporting was the passage, 'Eye

hath not seen, ear hath not heard all that God hath prepared for those that love Him."

Let thy tears flow, sweet Jeanie, till the brimming waters, bitter though they be as Marah's, overflow the font ; thy soul will yet be comforted.

Left alone in her chamber at night, she murmured, "This is my cross, and must I not bear it meekly?" The moon was shining over the distant harbor, whence arose a forest of masts ; and nearer by, lofty spires lay against the pale blue sky, pointing with their gilded fingers to the beautiful spirit land. She rose, and inhaled from her lattice the soft breath now coming over early flowers ; and as she gazed and listened, the harps of angels seemed tuned to welcome with Hosannahs her father's soul to heaven. Her heart beat audibly as she thought of the time when the "sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light ; and the stars of heaven shall fall"—when the Son of Man "shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth, to the uttermost part of heaven." Ministering angels seemed with their white wings to fan her aching brow, while with seraph voices, they sung the song of the redeemed, carrying her soul on full-fledged pinions to the mercy-seat, where in sweet fullness of faith, she laid her heavy burden down.

Through the stars, beyond the effulgence of heaven's gorgeous canopy, seemed to come a voice sweeter than the silvery sound of earthly lyres :

"When my father and mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up."

Her restless spirit which had caused her to weep and struggle from the insatiate cravings that mortals this side of heaven must ever feel, now quenched its longings in that living stream, whence all that are athirst may drink.

She had become, after the receipt of a letter from Ralph, again reconciled to him, yet her reliance on his principles

was not sufficiently firm to admit of a betrothal between them. His persevering attentions were to her a guarantee of his sincerity, and his professions of love too dear to her heart to cause her to be unrelenting in her displeasure.

It was a painful thought, in this hour of sadness, that he whom she loved could not now console her ; she saw his fond, radiant smile, but it was one that she would shut from her vision in the night-time of sorrow ; she heard his glad voice as it rang like a chime of gay bells on her ear—but it was not one to whisper, “Peace, be still ;” she felt the inspiration of his joyous gifted presence, but with flowery chains it bound her to earth and to life’s pleasures.

In the midst of her affliction, for the mysterious workings of the heart are often thus inconsistent, came the remembrance of her lover’s urgent suit.

Her answer must be made. She heard in the darkness, the fervor of an appeal, coming from lips whose accents were music ; she saw the reproachful glance of an eye that never quailed with her most cutting upbraiding, though the mounting blood told of the wounds they made ; and held tightly the heart, that leapt at the winning call, to find in his passionate love henceforth her home—in a husband’s devotion, freedom from the harrowing suspense, occasioned by the conflict of her parents.

It was enough that she could not see him in her grief—that for him she could give but love’s laughing hours.

In Ralph’s disposition and character she saw that they were alike ; this she had felt, as they together had enjoyed the beautiful, and with merriment the ridiculous. In impetuosity, and ardor of temperament, how similar ! how as one their senses had thrilled, their young hearts bounded !

Thus far was the parallel just. But in the education of the soul how diverse. Through the fiery ordeal of earth’s trials and temptations; they could not alike pass unscathed. The moon went down ere Jeanie slept. Over the heavens

the darkness that precedes the dawn had come. But the music of the golden harps grew faint—fainter, as the sorrowing one sank into a dreamy slumber ; and if angels winged over the couch of the virgin, she was unconscious of the blessed ministration. The spires that had seemingly kissed the stars, were now veiled in cloudy mists ; and over the gay world of sleepers, the watch-fires of heaven burned unseen.

On her Saviour's bosom, as a “little child,” Jeanie had sunk to rest ; promising Him that ere the morrow's sun had set, she would obey His last command : “Do this in remembrance of me.”

CHAPTER XXX.

MR. MILLER had not felt, until now, how hope had buoyed him until the last.

With earnest inquiry, he met the sad look of Mr. Hamlin on his return from his unsuccessful mission, and as he took his outstretched hand, said :

“Where is she? our Jeanie?”

“My poor friend—she cannot come—she sent you her love, and to God her prayers; but is detained from you, by a will she cannot thwart.”

“Did she know how ill I was?”

“No—she did not.”

“I would have laid her young head here—once more.”

The arms of the emaciated invalid fell heavily across his sunken breast. The action was eloquent with grief. It told his yearning—his desolation.

Mr. Hamlin delivered the daughter’s message; but was himself too much distressed to prove a comforter. On the entrance of the physician, he left his friend, for his own apartment. He was long in deep thought. “How can I” was the query of his mind, “aid poor Jeanie in this great, long cherished desire of her heart?”

CHAPTER XXX.

SOFTLY bright the sun shone down upon the afflicted girl, as she sought rest for her heart in the sanctuary of God. Her voice was tremulous with feeling as she bade her mother adieu, who petitioned her to come back smiling and rosy. How much more natural was the expression which followed her, though unseen. Had she not somewhere read, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon;" "Be ye not conformed to the world?" Her searching gaze, as the vehicle rolled from the door, showed a conscience ill at ease. For a moment the veil that enwrapped her features was thrown aside, and remorse distorted them with a look of anguish.

It was late when she entered the church. With hushed footstep she glided timidly up the aisle. The congregation were at prayer. She was alone in the pew, and observed no one around her. Her heart was bursting with sorrow. She soon felt a light tap upon her shoulder; looking up she saw the brilliant face of Ralph Larkfield gazing upon her earnestly. He had learned where she was, and followed her.

"Jeanie, I must talk with you—feign illness, and go out soon," he whispered. She returned a glance of reproach, accompanied with a low "hush."

A bright blush kindled on her cheek at the attempt made by Ralph to draw her into conversation.

In a voice low and sweet she sung the morning chants, and united audibly in the responses of the litany. Inseuni-

ble to other sounds, Ralph listened to the clear accents that had ever charmed him more than the simple beauty of Jeanie. He rarely attended public worship, and soon became impatient for a release. When near the conclusion of the liturgy, he tore from a prayer-book a fly-leaf, and on it pencilled words indicative of his wish for an answer, handing them secretly.

The arch look, the expressive eye, and pressure of her hand she could not mistake. Jeanie dropped the paper, without noticing its purport.

The sermon commenced, to which she listened with her eyes fixed earnestly upon the speaker. The subject of the discourse was "Christ and Him crucified."

The birth, the baptism, the miracles, the agony in the garden, the crucifixion, the resurrection and ascension of our Saviour, were eloquently and affectingly related. Then followed the mission and sufferings of the apostles, and their sacrifices for their hope and faith in Christ.

There was no oratory in the delivery of the preacher, but she felt she had listened to the truth as it is in Jesus—that it became the Christian to act upon the principles of the religion he professed, and that those must be positive and well defined ; that no apathy, indolence, selfishness, or pride must benumb its vital power ; but that in all things, the heart must be controlled, and moulded into the likeness of Christ.

Was there no sacrifice required of her heart ? no idol to resign, that she might erect in her own character a structure of moral beauty—a broad foundation of truth and right, and with zeal more perfect, join in the inward and spiritual worship of the Great Jehovah ?

Was not the beloved one beside her in heart a scoffer at the religion she prized, and would practise ? Would he not deride her inwardly, should she leave him to kneel at the sacramental altar, there to partake of the emblems of her

Saviour's death? Passionately as her pulses had thrilled beneath his fond glances, listening to tenderer words, was such bliss to be exchanged for the hallowed beams of the Sun of Righteousness?

When Ralph again looked at Jeanie, it was with a long-drawn sigh, and so ludicrous was its affected solemnity, but for her sorrow and devotional feelings she must have smiled.

The last prayer was offered, and the blessing pronounced, when he rose from a seat on which he had sat restlessly, and said, in a muttered tone:

“‘ Oh that I might have my request, and that God would grant me the thing that I long for.’”

He had observed the preparation for the celebration of the Eucharist, but thought not that Jeanie would partake of the rite.

“‘ You can leave me,” she said, looking for the first time fully in the eyes of Ralph. The light in hers, the radiance from the lamp within, spoke her enjoyment of God’s service. For the first time he was touched with solemnity, and seated himself, determining to stay with her. Her countenance wore to him strange, impressive beauty. Earth-born timidity and shame for a moment struggled with her soul. She would rather that he had left the church; the next, she crushed the feeling that crimsoned her cheek, and to herself murmured:

“‘ Ashamed of Jesus! sooner far
Let evening blush to own a star;
Ashamed of Jesus! just as soon
Let midnight be ashamed of noon.’

Ralph had never witnessed the ordinance of the Lord’s Supper, and now looked upon the spectacle with curiosity, if not interest. And when the gentle, youthful Jeanie passed him, as it seemed to him on spirit-wings, his frame chilled with sudden and fearful emotion. Across him came the words:

"The one may be taken, and the other left." He felt how unworthy he was to aspire to the possession of one so good and holy in her purposes and life. Religion for the first time seemed beautiful in his eyes, for Jeanie Miller was to him its typification. With his vision rapt, he saw her kneel at the altar.

So intently he watched her, he saw not by her side another form. The benediction was pronounced. She now arose, to meet the eye of Ralph, but instead, hers encountered those of his brother Philip. The quick blood mantled her cheek, then receded, leaving it paler than before. His look betrayed the recognition he did not speak. It seemed to Ralph the congregation would never pass out, and for the first time he felt a pang of jealousy as he saw the two walking together.

Listening to the organ, which swelled its anthems solemnly, with hushed footsteps, they trod the sacred aisle in unison of feeling. The outer door reached, Ralph came towards her, with a manner that spoke defiance to another's claim.

Mr. Hamlin retreated involuntarily, but still lingered in her pathway to the carriage. So deep was her solicitude for her father, she seemed unconscious of Ralph's presence. Her inquiring eyes were fixed upon the face of his brother.

"How is papa?" said she eagerly

"No worse, Jeanie."

"Will you take me to see him?"

"My dear girl! have you permission?"

"No—but my conscience tells me that I am acting right, even in thus disobeying my mother."

"What has determined you?" said Mr. Hamlin, looking upon Jeanie anxiously.

"Every emotion of my heart and conscience. My mother's house to-day, is to be a scene of gaiety."

"She will be very angry with you, and soon your only parent."

"You told me yesterday, I would not be fatherless. Will you not take me with you to papa?"

"You will accompany us, Ralph?" Mr. Hamlin drew the arm of Jeanie within his own.

The younger brother bowed haughtily, and went another way.

"Ralph!" said Jeanie, apologetically. But the sweet voice was now unheeded. A painful throb agitated the pleader's heart; she would not have caused him disappointment.

"You will scarcely know him," said Mr. Hamlin, as he handed her into the carriage, "till you meet his eye, and pleasant smile. You will be calm?"

The melancholy beauty of Jeanie's face, as she seemed engrossed in the contemplation of the change that had transpired in her father, was of that spiritual cast, that poets love to paint.

Yet strange as it might be, Mr. Hamlin thought not of it. So devoutly he worshipped the purity, the truth, the fidelity within the temple.

"I will try to be, and yet I fear." Her voice choked with emotion. "I think—I do believe it, Mr. Hamlin, if mamma was to see papa so resigned to die, the current of her thoughts might change. Oh! how my poor heart has craved their union on earth; must I too, be denied the hope that they, and all I love, will meet in Heaven?"

"Trust—trust, Jeanie. Do you not remember that when I knew not whether we should cling together, or part forever, the promise I then made? Is that promise less obligatory, because you are cast upon the waves of a more tumultuous sea?"

In a low voice, the comforter asked her if she had not faith to believe that the God who could condescend to reveal

Himself to her, although He concealed His ways and purposes, had not the same power to touch the heart of another benighted wanderer, even though He found her in the broad path that leadeth to destruction ?

" By your example," said he, " rebuke the erring ones you love—let it by its gentle teachings be a perpetual monitor, showing them the growth of grace in a character ever watchful of its duty. Was not David, though erring and imperfect, saved, and blessed in his earthly pilgrimage, and finally made the type of our Saviour, and the beauty of Israel ? Be comforted, be hopeful, Jeanie ; those you love, may yet turn to God. Some hearts and minds require more discipline than others. You have effected much, in bringing Ralph to church."

With a shudder, Jeanie recalled his conduct there. The deep blush, the remembrance caused, was attributed by Mr. Hamlin, to the thought that she had perhaps influenced him to good. Unconsciously, his manner cooled ; he grew reserved and gloomy. After a pause, in a tone puzzling to her, he said :

" I may—yes, whatever our relative positions, however great the barrier between us—still befriend you. Can you under all circumstances, trust and rely upon me ? "

Placing her little hand in the broad one of her friend, she said with a smile, that made more sad her tearful eyes :

" Wholly, entirely ; as I can none else."

" That trust, believe me," the tones of the speaker were hoarse with feeling, " shall never be abused. Oh ! why should I have inspired so sweet a faith ?" the heart added, " and no more."

Jeanie's eyes for the first time, fell beneath the glance that met them. It was unaccountably earnest.

" We are here now." The carriage stopped. " I will leave you in the parlor, and prepare your father to see you.

Remember that neither he, nor Arthur, have met you since the lost child was found."

Seating herself in an unoccupied part of the room, Jeanie observed that Ralph walked in the distance, within view, but with no intention of approaching her. She looked towards him, but he avoided her eye, and continued his pace. Jeanie was grieved, that in addition to all her trouble, she should have offended him.

Presently Mr. Lawrence entered, and after looking about inquisitively, saw Jeanie. Without ceremony, he familiarly accosted her, at the same time placing himself upon the couch where she sat, which space he so nearly filled, as to cause her to alarmingly retreat into the corner, in which she was now imprisoned by a barrier—odious and disagreeable. Whipping his boot with a flourish of his dirk-cane, he employed his unoccupied hand, in coaxing the forest of hair on his face, into a fanciful bird-nest; then suddenly, as if from some sagacious thought, turned himself squarely upon Jeanie, at the same moment, sweeping her cheek, as if unconsciously, with his petted adornment.

With a shake of a scented handkerchief, he laid his head back, when pretending weariness, he attempted to luminate a pair of dead eye-balls—an effort at nonchalance, in his own opinion, admirably successful, though he had the vitality to declare himself, "deliciously, and soporifically happy," and furthermore, that he hoped Miss Jeanie would be "superlatively amiable," if he took a nap in "heavenly proximity" to her.

"I will give you the whole couch," said she, rising.

"By no means, my sweet charmer—type of an angelic mother," objected the beau, at the same time seizing her hand, and notwithstanding her indignation and timidity, he attempting to raise it to his lips.

Ralph had seemed blind to Jeanie's situation, until the impudence of the swaggering Lawrence caused his blood

to boil to a pitch of fury, when, without warning, the latter found himself collared, and subsequently rolling upon the carpet. At the same moment, across his cheek he experienced smarting sensations from a succession of sharp cuts from his own cane, which in the hands of the enraged Larkfield inflicted no light chastisement. Blood was visible, and to Jeanie's horror, her insulter lay seemingly incapable of rising, though every limb was in distorted action, to restore the prostrate body to its perpendicular position.

With agitation, she saw a crowd assembling, while in reply to the queries caused by the affair, Ralph only muttered violent maledictions upon the offender; threatening him with another caning if he presumed to defend himself.

The contortions of the fallen culprit, being still unavailable, from his unwieldly size, aid was furnished him; when with a reeling motion, he made a plunge for his cane, and before his arm could be stayed, drew his dirk, and with a bull roar, and headlong pitch, aimed at the heart of Ralph.

Seeing the flash of the steel, and its direction, with a sudden dart through the crowd, and a wild scream, Jeanie clasped the neck of the endangered Larkfield.

By a violent rush upon the assailant, the murderous weapon was seized and disposed of. When the fair arms fell, they were no whiter than the cheek that lay hid on the breast of her rash young lover. While thus situated, supported by the arm of Ralph, who trembled yet with indignation, Mr. Hamlin entered the parlor.

The excitement had become intense, and although the affair had occupied but a few short minutes, to Ralph and Jeanie, they had been of momentous interest.

Without explanation, she extended her hand to Mr. Hamlin, saying: "take me away."

"Never—never, from me," muttered Ralph, holding the waist of Jeanie, as in a vice—"mine you have proved

yourself :" then aloud, "I will go with her, Philip, she must see me first ; give way, my friends—the lady is still faint."

Without reply, Mr. Hamlin saw Jeanie taken irresistibly by his impetuous brother, into an adjoining room, when the door closed upon them.

Bewildered, and agonized with terror—scarcely believing in the safety of the daring being her heart yet too well loved, Jeanie looked upon him, her eyes dilated, her form trembling in his rapturous clasp, while he murmured words of fervent import.

"Jeanie ! Jeanie !" was only audible in his whisperings, "the tale is told ! it were worth a thousand deaths to know that you so loved me. Can it be, my angel, it was you, so cold, so distant—you who threw your beautiful arms around me ?—you do not speak, has all your love departed ? oh ! that I might ever be in jeopardy !"

"Ralph—I cannot talk with you now—I know not why I am here with you—I was so terrified—where is your brother ? I must go to papa."

"Not until you assure me by word as well as act, that the breast on which this dear head was voluntarily laid, shall be henceforth your shelter ; its truth and fervor, your reliance."

"Ralph ! Ralph ! I could not see him kill you—I did not think of aught——"

"But of the sweet idolatrous worship, that only equals his you would have protected with these little twining arms. Jeanie ! Jeanie ! own it, and be forever mine."

"Ralph, do you not know—that we must not profane the Sabbath ? Oh, let me go !"

"Not till you say what your actions, to-day have proved.

Sweet and blissful to the loving girl, was the fond

entreaty—yet in the heart conflict, stern principle and duty were triumphant.

“Love you!” said she, her eyes filling, and her pale lip and cheek reddening: “Yes, I have proved it.”

“You shall not discard me, Jeanie. Listen: before the God you worship, I swear to win your respect. How long shall be my probation for your favor?”

“Ralph! can a nature so passionate, so faulty, soon learn self-control? The coming year will prove your sincerity, and your love for me. I cannot talk with you now. Oh! let me go to papa.”

“Go then with me.”

Arthur met his sister at the door of his father’s room; he silently folded her in his arms, and led her within.

Jeanie thought she was prepared to meet the invalid, but she had not pictured the change his lingering illness had wrought.

It is a fearful thing to see the cheek of infancy grow wan with illness; the lustrous eyes dim and hollow; the sweet fresh lips fevered and parched with death’s slow approaches, as he comes to steal a darling from its mother’s breast; appalling, too, is the beauty of a dying girl, her young face radiant with a hectic glow—the silken hair beautiful as in health, curling soft around the cold brow where death’s dews rest; but not a sight like the strong man laid low. It is another more impressive picture.

The pale hands of the invalid were extended to greet his child. The young head bowed upon the loving breast, silently, lest, even her gentle voice might too harshly shake the worn out tenement. Lightly, it lay there, as if it were a burden, the fount of tears imprisoned, while upon the heart the rush of feeling beat.

“She let you come, bless her! bless you, my youngest

darling ! You are ill—and looking pale. It is precious to have you here."

Jeanie smoothed the long thin fingers, looking all she could not, dared not, speak.

" Will she come too ? Once—only once, that I may see her face again ?"

" I hope so. Do you feel peaceful in view of death, papa ?"

" I have set my house in order ; and now await the bridegroom—I only wish my earthly work was done. My prayer has been that I might see you. You must not leave me again ; she would not part us now."

" Can I assist you ?"

" My sweet one ! It is but an insane wish, but I would once more see your mother. I would be reconciled to her, before my lips are closed. Is she well ?"

" Yes, and most beautiful."

" She ever was ! is she happy ? I shall leave her a portion of my estate—oh ! that she would secure a heavenly inheritance. My breath is short ; I cannot long be with you."

At this moment, Mr. Hamlin and Arthur approached the bedside. Ralph entered by another door. He looked excited. For a moment, his brother anxiously regarded him. The latter sat down by Jeanie, and with earnestness, begged her to accompany him to the outer room.

" Not now, Ralph."

With a stern glance, Mr. Hamlin, in a low tone said : " Can you not postpone such matters ?"

Ralph angrily retreated to an opposite window.

" Arthur, are you here ?" Mr. Miller put out his wasted hand.

" What can I do for you ?"

" You will find my will in my desk. I have provided for you all—not forgetting your Aunt Jane." The smile brought nearer the child and father. " You must have a

guardian ; Arthur will have other ties, and will not be jealous if I appoint one older. Philip, will you take care of my little girl ?" As he spoke he took the hand of the latter, and in it laid one of Jeanie's.

The murmured, "I will," was fervently uttered, but in a husky choked voice. At the same moment, the trembling hand was dropped. With an impetuous movement, Ralph approached the bedside, looking almost insanely upon the pale girl, as she sank on her low seat, her head bowed upon her father's pillow.

Mr. Miller observed the cloud upon the handsome brow, and noted its expression, as it fell upon his child. He seemed to read the tale of passionate love the face revealed.

"My child, will you make me one promise ?"

"What, papa ?"

"To never marry one to whom you cannot wholly give your affections."

"And my respect."

"And no one, without the consent of your guardian ?"

"Jeanie," exclaimed Ralph, in a low tone of entreaty—"you cannot promise this. It is more than he can ask."

"Ralph !" The tone of Jeanie was hushed, but reproachful.

"Is not this a fitting time," said he, audibly, his frame trembling with excitement, "to now pledge me your hand ?"

"Do you love him ?" said Mr. Miller, looking into the eyes of his child. With folded arms, and rigid features, Mr. Hamlin looked upon the young couple as they stood together. He saw the sweet, pale face kindle with serious emotion, and on the other arise the fevered expression of high-wrought passion ; and in the eyes resting upon the innocent girl, he observed, with agony that chilled his blood, that his brother was not in mastery of his reason.

"I have no room in my heart for another than my father, now." As Jeanie spoke, she gave an appealing look to

Ralph, to cease his importunate request, then motioned to Mr. Hamlin to approach her. He obeyed.

"One thing I promise," said she, "to rely in all things upon the counsel of my guide."

"You do well," said Arthur, with a fond look.

"Her happiness shall be my study," said Mr. Hamlin, in a low voice.

"Remember that," said Ralph, in the ear of Philip, as he went hastily from the room.

The excitement of the day had been great to Jeanie. Her face and agitation evinced it. Concealing her eyes, she hid from her father's view, and wept silently.

Mr. Hamlin whispered, "Will you not go and rest—the evening has far advanced. Arthur and I will remain. You must sleep a part of the night." She refused.

The long silent hours fled in the apartment of the invalid, where watched his three devoted nurses. Arthur finally sunk on a couch, in a distant part of the room. A dim light burned, sending its pale rays over the sick man.

The night air came through an unclosed lattice, that the sufferer might breathe more freely. Jeanie often sat down by it, for a refreshing draught from without—her eyes upon the stars, above which she pictured her father's future home. Then came pensive thoughts of her mother, now perhaps in a scene of gaiety, while she harbored unkind thoughts of her for the vocation she had chosen. With a rush of feeling, came the remembrance of Ralph's inconsiderate and rash request—feeling silenced and rebuked by a moan and cough from the sick bed, she went forward. Mr. Hamlin was dozing lightly in his chair. Jeanie was obliged to pass him, and in the darkness tripped in his robe. He roused and caught her. He saw how wearied she was.

"Jeanie, you must go to bed," said he, decidedly.

"Oh, no."

"This shawl is light," folding it around her, "and you

are cold—shivering. I will not listen to a refusal. Go to bed. Can you not trust me to take care of him?"

"Yes, I have been by the window too long." Jeanie shook as in a chill.

The little cold hands were rubbed, and put within the woollen folds. "I must nurse you, I see," said he, "drink this," handing her a cordial, "and go to your room. I will call you," he whispered, "should he be worse."

Ralph came to the door at the moment, and closed it hastily.

But sleep was vainly courted, for had she possessed the power to compose her nerves, the noise of revelry in an adjoining room, would have driven slumber from her pillow.

She heard the shuffling of cards, the rattling of counters and dice, the ringing of metal, and the popping of corks, amidst shouts of carousal and drunkenness. It was a fearful contrast to the scene she had left. Two hours passed, when she rose to return, so terrible seemed to her the oaths and merriment of the gamblers.

Wrapped in a cloak, she glided out, quickening her footsteps as she heard a door open, and a step behind her. She had to pass through a hall; nearer came reeling footsteps. She dared not look around her, but hastened tremblingly forward, feeling that she was pursued.

Suddenly her form was held motionless. With a thrill of horror, she met the blood-shot eyes fixed upon her face, and recognized the voice that with thick articulation, hurriedly uttered words of daring import.

"Ralph! Ralph! can this be you?"

The offender was repulsed, when she fled hastily. Terrified and faint she sunk upon a sofa. The reeling step seemed coming towards the door; Mr. Hamlin approached, as if to open it, when Jeanie stood before it, saying, "do not"—

"You have been alarmed—I *must*."

"I beg, Mr. Hamlin, do not for my sake!"

"Who has terrified you?" he spoke with anger and solicitude.

"I cannot say—he will go away."

"Jeanie, will you let me pass out?" Her slight frame stood against the door, her pleading eyes and voice upon the speaker. The steps in the hall grew fainter.

"This is useless. I know your objection, yet I cannot be thwarted or restrained. I must turn that bolt."

Jeanie complied weeping. Mr. Hamlin went into the hall, and when he returned, she was by her father's pillow. Never had her heart beat with such fearful anguish. He whom she loved with all his faults, was now a being fearful to think of. Never, never could she listen to him again. In the silent watches of the night, she gave him up. Morning dawned, the invalid was little changed. The attendants had not left their post. Jeanie looked as if years of suffering had done their work.

The nurse and Arthur, now took the place of Mr. Hamlin and Jeanie, when she went to her own room, to write to absent friends. While there she received a note from Mr. Hamlin, in which, he requested to see her.

She granted the favor. As she entered a room adjoining, he carefully closed each door, and with a cautious voice, and stern face, said :

"Jeanie, was it Ralph you met last night in the hall?"

"Forgive me, Mr. Hamlin—it was dark—"

"Jeanie! I must know, for his sake, do not screen him—if you would for your own."

"Do not speak so harshly."

Mr. Hamlin did not reply, but took her hand, and held it tightly—there was no tenderness in the act—but he seemed as if wrought by some frenzied feeling, to treat her as if she was alike guilty with Ralph.

"I have just returned from his room; and I must know

from whence he came when he met you ; will you tell me the truth, and not disguise it ?”

“ Mr. Hamlin, you will kill me by these questions—why must you know ?”

“ I cannot tell you, but if you know he was gambling with the rioters ; and from that room came forth, to ill treat you, I demand of you as my right, the intelligence.”

“ Is it not enough that my father is dying—and my mother absent from him ; and that I must resign forever one I love, but that you must try to extort from me evidence that may ruin him ?”

“ Jeanie—he had money in trust—it is gone. I would know if he has gambled it away : was he one of the gang, that I find last night disturbed you ?”

“ Mr. Hamlin, I will not answer you—” Jeanie’s tears now streamed through her fingers.

“ Forgive me—we have all been outraged, but I must not forget your affliction, in the weakness you exhibit towards one so unprincipled.”

“ Do you not love him ?”

The question so feelingly asked, brought tears to the eyes of the harsh judging man, as he sometimes seemed. “ For what do you suppose, I wish to ferret out such dishonorable proceedings ? would I not, think you, while a drop of his blood runs in my veins, save him from disgrace—and think you Jeanie,” the harsh voice softened, “ that one you love I would not succor ?”

“ Thank you,” a sad smile evinced Jeanie’s gratitude. “ Do you think papa can live a day longer ?”

“ I trust so—he has been talking incoherently of your mother. Do you know where she is to be, to-night ?”

Jeanie shuddered as she said : “ She was intending to go to a masked ball. I have to-day written to her, and told her, I should remain with papa while he lived.”

"I fear you will not be able to endure to the end—unless you can sleep."

"I feel to-day as if I would gladly lay down my aching head beside him."

As Jeanie spoke, she clasped her hands across her breast, and with calmness looked forth from the window. It was raining—the scene without seemed like that within—cheerless and gloomy. "If I had," thought Jeanie, "but a sympathizing mother now."

She turned, and met the eyes of Mr. Hamlin. In a voice changed as if addressing a little child, he said: "I hope you do not forget that it is a duty to be cheerful."

"You do not know the half of what I suffer."

"There is one sorrow, I know, that is harder than all else for you to bear—because it seemeth not to come among the providences of God; but ought we not to trust Him in the inscrutable paths in which He leads us—in those 'past finding out,' as well as in afflictions in which we can see His Almighty hand?"

"I know I ought to bear and suffer resignedly; but oh! I had hoped for him more fondly than this poor heart knew—pray for me that God will bring light out of this terrible darkness."

"Was he so very dear?" said Mr. Hamlin, taking the hand that lay so confidingly on his arm.

The lifted eyes dropped suddenly, and over the young cheek came a painful glow. "Did I not peril my life for him, without shame or timidity—that I might save him from that deadly steel?—oh! cruel is now the conviction that I did love him."

"Do not say *did*, Jeanie—it is not necessary to screen him?"

"Would I deceive you?"

"Forgive me—could he not appreciate such love! I ask

no testimony from you of his guilt. If in this you are afflicted, I am no surgeon to heal the wound ; and to him, I must only show myself a censor. Suppose I send him to another continent—will you hate me for the act ? Jeanie,” he resumed, “ is not this weakness ? I must have intelligence—if it cannot be obtained from you.” She made no reply.

After a pause, he said : “ I will send Arthur to you, I must go to your father.”

Mr. Hamlin left Jeanie, when a note was handed her, bearing the superscription of Ralph. A feeling of faintness seized her, while she read :

“ MY OWN DARLING :

“ I am in the depths of misery ; and frantic with my fears, lest I was rude to you last night. Oh ! did you but know your coldness drove me from you, you would forgive me.

R. L.”

Jeanie returned the following .

“ One who could not respect the situation of a dying parent—the sorrow of his afflicted child, or his own reputation enough, not to disgrace himself and her, is henceforth nothing to me.

J. M.”

Ralph Larkfield received the reply, and was fully conscious of his conduct the previous night. Maddened, he went immediately to the parlor, where he found her weeping. His face looked haggard and pale. In tones low and husky, he said, while attempting to seek the hidden face :

“ I have come to plead for myself. Cannot you overlook my unintentional offence ; but for Philip’s note, I had not been aware of it.”

“ I have no time or inclination to talk to you,” said Jeanie coldly, “ that you were not aware of your conduct, is enough ; I am going when Arthur comes, to papa.”

“ Will you not go with *me* ?”

With a slight shiver, Jeanie recoiled from the proffered arm, while she said : "No, no, leave me."

" You wish to meet Philip." The eyes of Ralph gleamed with rage and jealousy. " You *shall* not go to him. The act that publicly exposed your love, either bound you to me for life ; or disgraced you—yes, Jeanie, there is but one alternative ; a marriage with me, or the sneers of the public. Forget not you are the daughter of one who bears no good name. Scornfully as you treat me, you do not perhaps know that Arthur has been discarded by Mary Middleton, rather than suffer an alliance with the spotless Jeanie Miller. Marry me, and that name is lost in one never stained with dishonor."

Arthur Miller entered, hearing only the few last words of the speaker. With indignation he moved aside the form of Ralph from his horror-stricken sister.

" Who saved your name from dishonor ?" said he. " Did not he"—pointing to the door—" whom you have insulted on his death-bed, by your untimely proffers of marriage to his child ? Go now, if you are satisfied (thinking that Ralph alluded to her mother) with plunging another dagger in the breast of Jeanie. Come, dear one, we must go within."

New light was now thrown upon Arthur's situation to the mind of his sister. His silence, his reserve respecting the dissolution of his engagement, of which he had briefly told her, was now explained. Rumor had brought the truth to Ralph, and cruelly in a fit of jealousy had it been imparted to her.

She had shed no tear since hearing his last painful words, but like leaden bullets, each had entered her soul. Deeply agitated, she appeared with Arthur by her father's bedside.

For two hours they watched silently the fluctuating breath of their patient, doing for him what little could be done, while he smiled peacefully his thanks. Life was now fast

ebbing ; the physicians predicted that he could not survive another night. Breathlessly Arthur and Jeanie listened to the announcement.

“ Has he expressed any wish since I was out ? ” said Jeanie, taking her brother aside.

“ Only to see your mother.”

“ Will you not go for her, Arthur ? Oh ! if she knew that he was really dying ! ” The brother bowed his head as if struggling with conflicting thoughts.

“ Jeanie, for you I will—for no other on earth would I seek Mrs. Miller.”

Ere a half hour had passed the son and step-mother met ; for the first time since his father’s separation from her. We pass over an introduction and meeting, causing embarrassment and emotion. The boy no longer reproached his listener with his candid eyes, and truthful tongue ; but with frank and fearless brow, with tones fervid and deep, the man of dignified aspect and bearing, asked of Mrs. Miller the second favor of his life.

“ Madam, when we parted,” he said, “ you intimated that the hour would come when it might lie in your power to do me a kindness, when I would not scorn it. Do you remember the time ? ”

With agitation, and remorseful feelings never stifled, Mrs. Miller replied : “ Arthur, did you not forfeit that right ? ”

“ You asked my friendship for ‘ Jeanie’s sake ’—for her sake now I offer the hand I then refused you, and protection to my father’s dying bed. Do you deny his request, and that of his son and daughter ? ”

“ I cannot forget that you spurned the ring—yet I might not have declined a petition requiring less humiliation on my part.”

“ There could have been none proffered causing me as much. For Jeanie’s sake, we last met—for Jeanie’s sake I have done a thing at which my soul has revolted—but for

her, not even for *her*, would I, excepting at the bed of death, have united you to my father."

As the boy parted with his step-mother, so parted the man.

The return of Arthur brought a cry of lamentation from Jeanie's lips. It reached the ear of her parent. He had only seen her calm and cheerful.

To Mr. Hamlin, he said : "Tell Jeanie, 'Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted'—that I but go to the 'house of my Father'; let her come to me."

Jeanie knelt by the bed.

"Why do you weep?"

"I will not, papa."

"I leave you, my lamb, in the fold of the Great Shepherd. Before the rising of another sun I shall be gone, but will awake in the beams of One all glorious." Apparently wandering, he seemed then to identify his child with his wife. "Come nearer, Elinor," he murmured, "it was a cruel marriage—you did not love me."

The hour of ten came—the patient still lingered, and there seemed a probability of his existence until morning. Jeanie was grieved that Mr. Hamlin was absent, yet believed he was detained by some imperative cause. She feared something terrible had happened to Ralph. Though his physicians, nurses, and children were about his bed, the sick man's eyes wandered often towards the door; all knew he missed his constant friend. "Do not call him," he whispered, "he is exhausted. I have given him his last charge"—his eye rested upon Jeanie—"Where is Ralph?"

"He has been summoned," said the daughter, trembling lest he might, if he came, commit some improper act. Thus, with hushed sounds, with pale lips bending over the departing sufferer, the moments passed in the death-chamber.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THAT night Mrs. Miller was at her toilette, dressing for a fancy ball. Since her daughter's rebellious course, as she termed Jeanie's return to her father, she had more bitterly steeled her heart against him, and resolved to show the world her indifference to his situation, and her indignation against her daughter. She had never wholly credited the tale of his critical illness, believing it was invented to lure Jeanie from her.

Enraged that her love for Philip Hamlin should have been contemptuously slighted, she determined to brave his opinion of her course, and in the fashionable world to appear more than ever conspicuous. Without one feeling of desire to attend the great fête contemplated, she resolved to be present and sustain her character with brilliant effect, that she might not only attract the admiration of those present, but that the tongue of rumor and the public prints should applaud her. Seated before a glass for the arrangement of her hair, in dishabille, she indolently awaits attendance.

"Why you look so solemfied, Missis? I make you so buful if you throw de spression inter your face. De har hab oncommon sympathy wid de feelin's. Har be bery sympathetic, Missis."

"Be quiet." Mrs. Miller tossed her head impatiently, causing a downfall of the luxuriant rolls which Zaidee had wreathed so skillfully.

"Dar, Missis! I neber stay your har, kase you no ear—you tink 'bout dat Miss Jinny, and dat inconsiderable ole

man, what ain't no 'count, and 'bout departin' dese coasts. When I dress your har lass summer, you shake your head, and laff so ; now you no car if I put cotton bowl in it. How comical white folks be, che ! che !"

The lady's hair dressed, Zaidee became extatic over "de shinin' robe tail ;" then running from that to other glittering objects, her excitement reached a crisis over a pair of gay sandals, taking, as she declared, all " de brains nigger eber had." Mrs. Miller was arrayed, and well had the gabbling Zaidee performed her task.

The trembling buds that lay on her bosom, were each gemmules of superb brilliancy, corresponding with the gem-bossed tiara, which shone on her brow like a diadem. She wore a mask, also a starred veil of silk.

It had been well for the happiness of the gay woman had she worn no deeper, blacker mask, covering the wretchedness within the veil—no poisoned band beneath the glittering crown, piercing her brain, causing her to sicken, and loathe her detested life.

At the hour of ten she stepped into her carriage in the guise of a Circassian. At the same period her husband partook of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Both were winging for a court—the one where a brilliant goddess holds her revels, marshalling her followers from every clime and land, in array variegated as painted insects float through skies of tropic splendor; where music sweet as Orpheus' band is making melody—where voluptuaries play the Bacchanal, Apollo tunes his lyre, and Cupid whets his arrows, to make sure his victories. The sceptre, diadem, and laurel-crown, are the gew-gaws of this great dramatic court, and wine of Falernian sweetness, the inspirer of the fool's mirth who drinks deeply from its ruby chalice.

The other is pluming for a sky of never-waning splendor, for a seat around the rainbow-girdled throne, even that of the great Eternal. " White raiment," and " crowns of gold "

adorn its elders. The music is not of earthly spheres, but the lightnings and thundering of spirit-voices, the illumination lamps of fire, which are the "seven spirits of God," where they rest not day or night in their seraphic song of praise to Him who "was and is to come." The reward of the faithful servant is not to be the homage of worldly flatterers, but such as the King of the great feast giveth to the followers of the Lamb—to him who overcometh and keepeth His works unto the end—even the morning star.

The night was passing into morning. The revellers heeded it not. Day was, within their atmosphere, made brilliant by a thousand suns. Wearied with a scene that cured no heart-ache, Elinor Miller escaped from her cavalier and passed alone down a stair-case lined on each side with orange trees, laden with their golden balls, and from thence to an outer door leading to a piazza, extending around the hall of festivity. The stars shone bright and clear through the pillars loaded with flowery wreaths, till art seemed lost in the luxuriance of nature. Here, were turbanned slaves with the fan and sparkling goblet, tendering wine and luscious fruits. Steps lined with plants, led to a garden below, whence on the night air, arose powerfully the fragrance of the verbena and jasmine.

Mrs. Miller seated herself in an arbor, to indulge in quietude her miserable reflections. In every view, she seemed to see a hearse and plumes, in every strain of music to hear a funeral knell. As in a catalogue came reproaching her, each kind act of her dying husband—then in burning characters, on another page, she read her scornful reception of his bounty, when she had trodden to the very dust the offerings of his love. Like scorpion stings, they pierced her conscience, now that for her there was no redemption of the past.

But in view of his death, there arose hopes silvering the clouds, that blackened her soul. She would then be free.

Philip Hamlin would appreciate, and wed her. While absorbed, a note was handed her.

“Will you meet me at the outer gate?

P. H.”

The character of the scene in which she mingled, was such, that a message of mysterious import occasioned no surprise ; she knew that here intrigue of every nature was practised, and that concealment was the charm that lent zest to its enjoyment.

But as soon would she have expected any marvellous inconsistency, as that the author of this communication, would have thus sought to meet her. With gratified pride she passed onward, repulsing each admirer who offered to accompany her, and hastened to greet Mr. Hamlin. Undisguised, he met, and hurried her silently towards a carriage. She attempted to speak, to demand explanation ; but her voice was hushed with a low emphatic appeal to “trust” him, asking no questions. Trembling with excitement, the infatuated woman was led, she cared not whither—for what had she to leave? was she not, her heart whispered, with him she idolized? Her husband might be dead, she was to be the honored wife of one who had long secretly adored her. Delicious to her passionate, wayward nature, was the romance of the elopement. They had reached the outer court. With his eyes fixed upon the brilliant being beside him, he said in a stifled voice : “will you go with me, or are you too happy here?”

“Most miserable.”

“Then come.”

“On what errand?”

“Hasten, we have no time to waste.”

Mrs. Miller followed, and without elucidation, to the carriage, her heart asking, “why is he still so cold, so stern, so inexplicable?”

She could only console herself in the words :

“ Trust—trust, asking no questions.”

She sat by him, excited and radiant, he looking upon her in the starlight—with his eyes fixed upon her gold and crimson dress, her glittering brow—contrasting her with her pale, perhaps ere now, shrouded husband.

“ Why do you bear me away, like an enchanter, asking no query of my will or heart ?”

“ I have no time, I am on an errand rash, but not purposeless. Hush ! we are near the end of our drive. When you alight, conceal yourself and follow me silently.”

“ I am insane ; for the first time, lost to all sense of decorum—never, never did I so abandon myself to the guidance of another. Do you appreciate the regard that sways me ?”

“ Be calm—and say nothing. You will not repent the change.”

Not until seated in a private saloon of the hotel could she obtain one explanatory word : then with solemnity, Mr. Hamlin said :

“ I have brought you from a scene of folly, to the death bed of the righteous.”

With a faint shriek, Mrs. Miller attempted her escape.

“ Be calm, Elinor,” Mr. Hamlin held her firmly. “ You will not regret the step : come to him, it is his last request—his last hope—on your knees, accept his blessing—the forgiveness of one you have so wronged. It will soothe his passage to eternity, and ever comfort your beloved child.”

“ I have no place there—no right to mercy or forgiveness—I cannot see him die—my neglected, insulted husband !”

“ You must, for his sake, for poor Jeanie’s.”

“ She hates me ! they all hate me ! and you, when have you ever so fervently despised me, as to-night ?”

“ No—before God, I do not blame you for this—I drew

you by an effort of will. I knew that you could not resist me, but I would not use the power I possess for purposes of evil. Again I bid you follow me. You cannot refuse."

"I can never forgive you—who else could have so deluded me!"

"Think not of me—I am but his messenger. The room is dark, glide in softly, if he is living, he will know you."

"Oh, this dress!"

"He will not regard it, hide its tinsel."

"My will rebels."

"Would you," said he earnestly, "even darken to him the valley of death? Follow me—you must." After longer persuasion Mrs. Miller consented.

With hushed tread, so light, it roused not the midnight watchers, who with parted lips, and bent forms there sat; the wife and friend, in the darkness approached the couch of the dying. Mr. Miller yet breathed, and retaining his reason occasionally spoke, asking each one about his bed to come nearer, while he talked to them as if already at the gate of heaven. He was the first to see Mr. Hamlin, and smiled a welcome, while he murmured, "You are not too late."

"No, my dear friend:" leaning forward, the former whispered, "can you see your wife and be calm?" By a wave of his hand, all retired from the bedside, but she who in her cloak stood concealed within the folds of a curtain.

A deep agitated sigh came as if from one breath, while the form sunk, the face still hid, by the side of the bed.

With eyes that suddenly gleamed, as if the expiring lamp within had received new oil, Mr. Miller ejaculated :

"Bless the Lord, he has granted my prayer! Come near me, Elinor, this is happiness—you are all here now." Low sobs burst from the breast of Jeanie, when by her mother's side, she knelt.

"It is mamma! oh, comfort her before you die."

The husband raised his hand ; it fell upon the head of his wife. He seemed speechless, but sensible. He moved his fingers in her hair, and laid them on her brow. The veil had partially fallen, revealing the jewels which gleamed in the dim light. Jeanie gently pushed them aside.

“Look up, Elinor—do not fear to see me, we are all peaceful, and loving now.” The eyes dilating with fearful brilliancy, were opened upon those of her dying husband. He spoke audibly. “It is precious to know you are all around me, even thee, my lost bride ! O God ! that I might live to tell thee all my heart !”

“Spare me !” moaned the crushed wife.

“Bless thee, rather, ill fated girl ! yours was a cruel portion, united to one you could not love. But on the confines of another world, I will not speak of earthly ties sundered and broken—I would not rend your heart by recounting the sufferings I have no breath to tell—but in one last embrace enfold you all, trusting that in that blessed land, where there is ‘no marrying, or giving in marriage,’ that there, as God’s children, we shall meet around His throne. To Him, dear Elinor, I would commend you with my other beloved ones, praying that in His sight you may be preserved pure and blameless, to await His coming, when with holy angels He shall gather together His elect.”

Becoming exhausted, wine was offered him.

“Will you give it to me ?” His look was upon his wife.

Dropping her head, she said :

“I am unworthy.”

“There is ‘none good—no, not one.’ Leave me”—Mr. Miller signified that he would be left alone with his wife. The cloaked form was left motionless with her face concealed.

“Look up,” faintly petitioned the almost breathless

sufferer. "I would comfort, not grieve you. The hour will come when you will think I would not have made you miserable. You will not ever shun my memory." Then laying his hand gently upon the gem-ringed fingers, he added, "another may make you happy, but let me implore you, as the father of your only child, not to wed hastily. You must ere this feel that life is but an ephemera. When you lie as I do, the waves that have borne you onward will seem to you, but few. Would that I could know that the closing one of yours, would cradle you peacefully to a home of rest ! Let not, Elinor, the breakers dash high and wild over the wreck of your immortal soul ! You will not look at me, and I cannot see the sweet face I once loved to gaze upon so well. I among the rest cruelly wronged you in my adoration of its beauty. You will scorn me no longer, I could not have lived with you, and not loved you, had you been less cold—and I feel now that I did but my duty when I gave you up. Not for this, would I crave your pardon, but for blindly wedding you. Have you no word ? I seem to have lingered for this."

"No, no, not one."

"Your form shakes with emotion—so it trembled when I left you. You have a precious charge in our child. Let her afflicted heart find peace in the life befitting her tastes ; and should she marry, let love sanctify the union. Put your hand once on my forehead—let me die feeling you do not hate me. You cannot ? Will you give me no sign of amity ? not when you came to see me die ?"

Elinor Miller's face and form sunk lower and lower, until but the rich folds of her hair were only visible, as they fell upon the pillow of the dying.

The pale fingers of her husband played languidly with the tresses, and passed over the throbbing temples of the prostrate wife. "One question"—the tongue faltered, and seemed almost inaudible.

"Oh, desist!" lowly petitioned the wife. "Go to your angel home, and leave the doomed, the scorned, to perish. I am not worthy to kneel at your feet—less to pollute your brow with the hand I gave you as a guerdon of my faith. Spare me your kind words, for I came here from a ball, hiding my dress—Oh! my God, not—not to see you die!—not for your blessing, but as the final act in the drama of my wicked life. I would have fled, I cared not whither, so it were with him I loved." The hand he had taken was moved as with a shock.

"This is the last drop of wormwood, and I can drink it. No—you need not come nearer—for I am growing cold—cold—call them all."

Around his bed came the absent. Looking about him, Mr. Miller said, "Where is Ralph?" No one replied, "at the masked ball," yet there was one present who had accompanied and left him there. With his eyes on Jeanie, he added :

"Give me one promise, Elinor—let Mr. Hamlin direct your judgment regarding *her*." The voice grew fainter—"Come closer—each, all of you—your *her*, my noble boy! Philip—Jeanie—you are here"—

"And mamma," whispered the trembling girl.

The hand was not raised, nor the dim eye turned, but the pale lips murmured—"I bless and forgive." Rallying, he intimated that he wished sang :

"Why am *nt* the Christian dying?"

Jeanie commenced, in tones scarcely audible, the fourth stanza, and was able to clearly articulate the words :

"Scenes sublē, high and glorious,
Now fo bid his longer stay;
See him *se* o'er death victorious,
Angels beckon him away.

“ Hark ! the golden harps are ringing,
Sounds unearthly fill his ear ;
Millions now in heaven singing,
Greet his joyful entrance there.”

The prayer for the dying followed, then a deep hushed silence. Slowly the long thin hands were raised—outstretched as if in one loving embrace. The death dews beaded the pale brow, and around the white lips settled a blue shadow. The dark angel had winged by and left it there.

Each form, save one, was raised from its bending posture, every eye but hers looked intently upon the dead ; she had sunk, crouching further, further away, hearing nothing, seeing nothing, after the appalling whisper—“ *he is gone !* ”

All knew that her voice had been silent in the hymn and in the prayer, but none that the wife could not look upon her dead husband, until she fell forward senseless. Her cloak dropped from her shoulders, leaving her in her glittering fringe and crimson, with her jewelled tiara, and her gold broidered sandals, beside his corpse. At the feet of him she had scorned in life, she was now stretched, her face as bloodless.

CHAPTER XXXII.

RALPH had returned too late to bid farewell to his benefactor, having been driven by the violence of his passions to seek revenge upon Jeanie by going to the ball. During a brief visit to his room that night, Mr. Hamlin learned that after his return he had gambled away funds entrusted to him by his patron, which by inheritance now belonged to Jeanie. As her guardian he deemed it his duty to seek his brother and demand restitution. It was a painful task in this hour of affliction.

"I will throw every bill to the winds," said the enraged Ralph, after a conference with the latter. "This sum belongs to me, or will as the husband of Jeanie—and I tell you," muttering an oath, "I will marry her, with or without your consent."

With resolute energy the elder brother compelled the delivery of the contested amount.

"Ralph," said he, "I have done but my duty to a dead man's child, but now it remains for me to perform a sterner task. I bid you depart immediately for a voyage to the East Indies, on some business in which I will employ your services, or I will not refund the amount you have squandered, and your breach of trust will be exposed to the other executor of the estate. Will you go?"

A violent argument succeeded, accompanied by high words on the part of the younger.

Finally calmed by the decisive bearing of his brother, Ralph Larkfield replied :

"And you will pay this, if I comply? I loved Jeanie,

the angel, but I needed her money. I may as well go, for I suppose there is an end forever put to our intercourse. Yes—it is a villainous fact, the night Mr. Miller died, I was spending his money—I lost, and drank to drown my sense of the injustice—but I wish this was all—but it is not—I afterwards forfeited Jeanie's respect, in a manner she will never forgive. But I believe," Ralph's voice changed, "that I am not ungrateful to you both for your forbearance, and if ever I am another man, I shall owe my salvation to you, and to her, who is no more fit for my wife than a seraph. Tell her so—I shall never see her unless with a clearer conscience than I carry away." After a silence, Ralph added : " You alone are worthy of her. I have defrauded you of enough, but I will do one righteous act—when I rid her of my presence. Here Philip—" taking from his finger a ring : " give this to her—she will understand it, and tell her that her words and memory shall be sacred, and that by no other name shall I ever seek to call her, than that of sister."

" She gave it to you ?"

" Yes, but with a noble motive."

Turning hastily aside, the brother replied : " No, keep the token ; it may be a monitor to you. I appreciate your words, but I do not forget that you have inspired the first deep love of the gentle heart you have perhaps broken. You wrong me in your suspicions of my double purposes. Jeanie Miller, with my consent, shall never marry the man to whom she does not wholly give her affections. I bid you go away, to save you from temptation—a long voyage may bring you to reflection and steady habits. I may not see you again, take this purse—you will find other instructions in this document—may God bless, and keep you !"

The brothers parted, the elder to fulfill his duties to the deceased, the other to prepare for his voyage.

After Mr. Hamlin left Jeanie, she opened the epistle he gave her, and read the following :

"NEW YORK, —— Place.

"The relatives of the late Mrs. Peter Castleman, are notified that she deceased, Wednesday, April ——, 4 o'clock, P. M., after a brief illness, occasioned, it is thought, by the supposed destruction of some of her effects by fire. The articles have since been recovered, and not being considered worthy of transportation or preservation, have been given to the indigent.

SYLVESTER CASTLEMAN."

"A. MILLER, Esq."

It was Mr. Miller's request that he should be buried in his native town. Deacon Selden's family had been apprised of the event, and awaited the arrival of the afflicted friends.

Mrs. Miller parted with her child looking fearfully changed, but without demonstration of grief, and when asked if she was satisfied with the arrangements made, replied :

"Do not consult me. I have no choice, or interest in the matter."

"Were not his last words precious to you, dear mamma? was it not consoling to be reconciled to him? Oh! tell me this before we part."

"Will it take away this load Jeanie?" Mrs. Miller clasped her breast. "I could almost hate him that caused me to see him die. If he had but cursed, instead of blessing me!"

"You will not always suffer so."

"Why should I not, did he not suffer, till his anguish killed him? I know it, I feel it now. How he put my hand from him—"

"But he loved and blessed you, and oh! with his last words he forgave you. Is this no comfort?"

Jeanie fell on her mother's neck, and wept.

“ Jeanie ! Jeanie !” said Mrs. Miller, removing her child, with a motion indicating despair. “ There is no peace for me for time or eternity. Go, and leave me—take him to his home, and let me go to mine.”

“ Won’t you go with us ? do—do dear mamma, we will make you happy. We cannot mourn for papa, and it will be a sweet enjoyment to prepare to follow him.”

“ No—send Ralph to me—we went to the ball together.”

“ That night ! was he too there ?” Jeanie shuddered.

“ Yes, and his brother. Yes, Philip Hamlin, you have fulfilled your work, and at last humbled me. Go, child, and leave me.”

Jeanie’s entreaties were vain, and the daughter and her mother separated. Mr. Hamlin communicated to Jeanie the departure of Ralph, with his final message to her. He could have wished she had wept ; it would have pained him less, than to see her clear cold features turn aside, making her profile like marble. If she would but speak, instead of looking upon him with her wide expanded eyes so sorrowfully.

“ Jeanie—I sent him away, do you hate me for it ?”

A pause!

“ If it had not been right, you would not have done so. It is a shock to know that he has gone—to feel that we have parted finally. He bound me to him with a strange bewildering spell—dear misguided Ralph !”

“ Hope still, Jeanie—he may return, and yet be worthy of you.”

The pale features spoke resolution, and determination.

“ Mr. Hamlin,” said she, “ were he to become ten times worthy of my hand, and sorrowing heart, one who had once so forfeited my respect, as Ralph did on those two memorable nights, can never be my husband.”

“ You forgive me then for bidding him depart. I deemed it the only chance for his reformation.”

A sad smile flitted across the sweet face.

"If the act was not consistent with honor nobleness and virtue, such would not have been your course."

"Then you do not severely judge me? We are ready now to go—Arthur is superintending some—matters—"

Mr. Hamlin hesitated, fearing to cause pain.

"I understand you. You mean dear papa. We will then go to the carriage."

The journey to the travellers was a peaceful one. The dead slumbered in his coffin. It mattered not to him who had once animated the frail tenement, that his body was now concealed carefully from those on board the steamer.

Jeanie, deeply shrouded in black, was mostly hidden from the curious gaze of strangers; though she sometimes walked on deck. With fond solicitude she now watched each expression of her brother's face, while she asked herself, if the painful statement which Ralph had made in his passion could be true—that she, from association with her mother had a reputation so odious, that it could blast a brother's happiness? She resolved at no distant day, to solve the matter, and if possible, by any sacrifice, to gain for his sake, the confidence and respect of her he loved. That like herself he should have seemed in deep affliction since they had met, occasioned her no surprise. His gloom and depression of spirits were therefore no evidence of a disappointment so keen. He was as ever affectionate and devoted. Could such be his bearing, if she had been the cause of so much sorrow?

One day while pacing the hurricane deck together, a man asked another in her hearing, if there was not a corpse on board.

"Yes," replied his auditor, "and I shall be glad when we reach the end of our trip. I am superstitious about such things. I would not have taken the boat if I had known it. It ought to be thrown overboard."

Jeanie shuddered with distress, when Arthur looked

significantly towards the speakers. The black dress of the afflicted child was seen. The loud voices were hushed, and Jeanie's sorrow held sacred. The rudest had respected her grief, but too late had the wound been inflicted. She could not recover from the impression that the dear remains, for whose interment they travelled, were to others an object of horror and avoidance. She went to her state-room in deep affliction and consternation. In vain Arthur tried to comfort her. She feared the prosecution of an act, in imagination so painful.

Her thoughts wandered to the green hills, and the peaceful sequestered spot where she would have her father buried. She had now terrible surmises, and it was a vain task for her brother to attempt to quiet her nervous apprehensions.

The matter of alarm was communicated to Mr. Hamlin. He immediately sought, and found her sitting by the lattice of her room, which opened towards the river. Her head was bowed in her hands—her hair hung loosely about her neck, as if she had been careless of its arrangement, her whole appearance indicating absorption in grief.

He sat down by her: laying his hand upon her brown folds, he said :

“Jeanie, I did not think you could be so distrustful.”

She looked tearfully into the intelligent face of the speaker, and meeting the tender expression of reproach returned, her eyes fell, to wander off upon the broad stream, where she seemed to count each glassy wavelet—then farther on, her gaze extended to the distant line that girded the shore, but a low bank against the evening sky. Light airy clouds flushed with purple lay against the horizon, momentarily assuming new shape and hue. Upon them, she finally looked intently, as if the heavens were no barrier to the illimitable range of her thoughts.

Her eyes remained fixed as Mr. Hamlin spoke of the folly of harrowing her mind with imaginary ills, and especially

giving herself unnecessary uneasiness—for the senseless clay of the dearest friend. Intently she at last seemed to listen, knowing nothing of the fast beating of the heart, whose yearnings it were vain to silence in communion with her.

"In virtue of my second best claim to your regard," said he, looking at the receding form of Arthur, "may I not remain with you awhile, and we will see if we cannot dissipate such idle phantasies."

Jeanie assented. It was evident to Mr. Hamlin that sorrow had produced an excited state of her nervous system, and that she but needed some calming influence. He endeavored to subject selfish considerations in his conversation, avoiding even a glance of the tearful eyes, that distracted his thoughts from his subject. The little hand now resting on his arm, as he spoke he tried to look at, as if it were beautiful marble, and to her low winning accents, to listen, as if they were meant for the ear of him she had loved so well.

"Do you not," said he, "think it as wrong to doubt the care of the Omnipotent over your father's dead body, as to be solicitous for his soul's welfare? You know, Jeanie, He says that our mortal part shall rise again: why then should we fear to leave it in his keeping?"

"Oh! if they should throw it overboard!" the look, while speaking was almost frenzied.

"Will you not believe me! this fear is groundless—struggle to properly balance your mind, and the vagary will disappear."

"Oh! but I feel, as if he must not go down in these terrible waters, where we struggled so fearfully. Who can feel for me in all my affliction?"

The query was plaintively murmured. Had they not breasted the dark waves together, and might they not the sea of life?

"Do you think that He who can 'turn the shadow of

death into the morning,' who 'maketh the seven stars and Orion,' has not an eye that never slumbers? Can He forget a being made to associate with angels and archangels, though she is but a feeble mortal, her heart but a fountain of tears? Do you think, Jeanie, you have no sympathy with such a friend?"

"Oh! if I could give up his mortal part, and think he was not *there*!" Jeanie pointed in the direction where she believed her father's remains to be placed.

"Is it not sweeter to think of that 'pure river, clear as crystal,' where he drinks the waters that no mortals taste?—of the eternal summer, and the eternal music he enjoys?—'and there shall be no night there, neither light of the sun,' and yet effulgence we cannot conceive makes glorious his Paradisal home. Will you not look upwards, Jeanie?—the clouds on which your eyes were so long fixed, have faded in the sky, and all is rosy and radiant there."

The query conveyed was read on the smiling lips that nearer approached her own, still quivering with sorrow.

"And those from my spirit you would have so vanish, but in the place of the clouds comes a star luminous and beautiful. Where now is mine to light my path?"

"It is coming slowly through the blue. The spark is born of divinity, and will burn when the stars of heaven are for ever dimmed. It is a little orb now, but it will grow brighter through eternity.) You need no other, Jeanie, for the fuel that enkindles it comes from a never-dying source. This little star is now under a cloud, but let the wing of the bright angel Faith rustle by, and in your eyes I shall see it as ever clear and beautiful. God sometimes permits this obscuration of the light within us, but we need never fear that He will suffer blackening mists to long rest upon the soul that He has once illumined. I can only say to you, as you did to me upon the waters, 'Pray—trust!'"

With an eager thirsting for spiritual food and teaching,

Jeanie listened with an humble faith in one she deemed wise and good, and as his tones softened, and his theme became less elevated, tenderly addressing her on matters of daily occurrence and interest, she mourned for the first time in view of the period when they would be separated, and she should not have with her so kind a friend and guide.

"Who will comfort me, and teach my duty," said she, artlessly, "when you leave me again?"

"You will not regard my absence," said he, half coldly, and with sudden reserve; "you will have much to occupy you in preparation for your new home, which you will soon choose, and I must provide. Perhaps you will return to your mother?"

"I do not know where to go. I never have felt positive what course I ought to pursue. I shall, I fear, be always bewildered."

"You are not then through the wood?" Mr. Hamlin smiled. "But are you alone in this feeling? Who of us does not ever seem on a journey? sometimes on rising ground, where the sunlight comes goldenly, then down again in a valley, perchance bordered by roses, but where we tread on thistles—a wily labyrinth leading to darkness mysterious and impenetrable; but who would not feel helplessly along, though with fevered brow, and a trembling step, while led by the hand of Him who will open for us the pearly gates?"

"Oh! but there are times when I am so benighted."

"Is not the word of God a lamp?"

"But I am so helpless and ignorant. I need some one to bear the light, pointing my way—home!—home!—shall I ever find one on earth?"

"You would be derided by any one else, Jeanie, that you, an heiress of an immense estate, should pine for a home!"

"Ah! but they would not understand me! do you think that a world of palaces, even an Eden of beautiful bowers,

could supply me with all my heart craves in that dear word? Must not that desideratum of my earthly hopes, be sanctified by the presence of those of my love, faith and fondest trust? There to find the end of the long wood, and a path out of it, illuminated by the torch of truth, wisdom and goodness. Oh! Mr. Hamlin, you are so kind to listen to me, that I tell you as I would none other, how this beautiful ideal of a home enters into my dreams, how the yearning has grown from a threadlike rill, to a broad rushing river. As a child, home was my mother's sheltering bosom, and my father's protection and love; as I grew older, it was a more brilliant conception, and into this sanctum I would bring all that was flowery and beautiful; and as I read poetry and began to dream, I would have filled it with the works of genius, and there worship the living heroes, who could so feast my imagination. But when I began to love," Jeanie's voice trembled, and her breath was hurried, "I forgot all but the presence of the gifted but faulty being, who could enchain me, even while he made me weep. Home seemed then, even though it were in a desert-wild, close to his loving heart. Oh! how I have loved, wept and prayed for Ralph!" Jeanie could no longer restrain her emotion, and Mr. Hamlin looked upon her as if he had seen an angel, in agony of tears. "But," she continued, looking up, "my dream of a home with him was short, I soon knew that it would be but a tumultuous sea, sometimes sunny as gilded waves, and then stormy with dark forebodings, while I trembled lest he never would reach the haven where my hopes were placed; and yet, I did not give him up—no not until that dreadful time when he tore from my heart the illusive veil that had hid his undisciplined nature, and glossed to me his vices. And now again I wander in spirit, my father dead—my mother so uncongenial in her habits and tastes—my brother's

hopes wrecked, by his unfortunate relation to the sister he so loves—where to me is my home? Think me not ungrateful to those who have so kindly reared me, but I do not feel that, in such a sphere as they live, I can grow as I would in intellectual, worldly and heavenly wisdom—I yearn for a wider expansion of my faculties, for deeper teachings—am I wrong to thus aspire? Is it arrogant in one so young and feeble?"

" You were ever like the lark, Jeanie, and ever soaring for a purer sky; but while you have the great aim, that of seeking the applause of heaven, I know of no limit to which I would put a check to your flights. The humble ignorant Christian purchases a seat in heaven, but 'in my Father's house,' are there not, 'many mansions?' It seems to me not inconsistent to believe, that those minds richest in godly attainments, shall be greatest in Christ's kingdom. The greater their effulgence on earth, the more lustrous in the diadem of God. There is beauty in contentment, but more in a soul exalted with the glorious ambition to be perfect even as our Father in heaven is perfect. You are sad, and now easily excited," he continued, " from sorrow, watching and weariness; but you will be happier. Your heart will be made glad from many beautiful and pure sources of joy. It is vain and ungrateful to insist upon the barrenness of the world to produce solid happiness. The creation is enough of itself to make cheerful the heart of the good Christian. Do you remember what Milton says of natural beauty, and its power to dispel gloom? It will not be alone the singing of birds, the murmur of brooks, and the varied music of nature, which, will most delight you; but with the harmony, will come swelling emotions of gratitude towards the great Source of such wonderful creations—such feeling as will consecrate each leafy bower, and make to you, every morning and evening

ramble, but a heart hymning song of praise and thanks giving.”

“I know not why,” said Jeanie, “that you have the power to lighten the weight that oppresses my mind ; perhaps it is that I seem to acquire strength to live, from the ambition that your words inspire, to commence on earth that sublime course of progression, that shall make the soul grow brighter throughout eternity.”

The idea seemed to wrap her in a deep maze of thought. After a long period of silence and repose, during which Mr. Hamlin watched the shadows of feeling that played over her features, she, suddenly, with a beaming glance, said : “My imaginations of heaven within the last half hour, have become beautifully vivid, and from glory to glory I seem to have been carried, while golden sounds filled the air, and among the shining ones I saw my father. I know that this is but a phantasy, but may not God have painted the picture to soothe me in my sorrow ?”

“We read somewhere :

‘When first an infant draws the vital air,
Officious grief should welcome him to care :
But joy should life’s concluding scene attend,
And mirth be kept to grace a dying friend ?’

It is my belief that the vision comes from on high, and that in your father’s death, you should be joyful rather than sad. Do you think I can leave you now, with the hope that you will be more cheerful ? We shall arrive to-morrow. You will not be childish longer ?”

The “good night,” was returned with a smile.

It was a beautiful summer day, when they reached the farm of Deacon Selden ; and a meeting full of painful emotion, for the lost had been found, and the living had passed away.

The old people had become more feeble, and more child-

ishly loving. Aunt Jane had faded to a shadow since the death of one she had so long, secretly, and with self-denying integrity, loved. Sweet to her now was the reflection that she had never been tempted aside from the path of duty, or from it led the departed by encouraging him to seek the divorce that he had once contemplated. With tearful emotion she listened to the account of his last days, and of his reconciliation to, and forgiveness of, his wife.

Keturah was half insane in her ungovernable joy at Jeanie's return, which she manifested by running from the room to cry, then returning while with choking sobs, she hugged her in her arms, crying at intervals, "poor toad ! poor toad !"

Jeanie followed the deceased to his burial. The bright sun glared with its golden beams upon the blackened pall ; the trees murmured their sweetest whisperings over the new-made grave ; and the wood minstrels, that the dead had loved, sung and chirped in the boughs that overhung the tufted mound—so gay is nature, so little heedful of the mourner's tear !

Days of quiet sorrow passed, during which Jeanie was cheered by the presence of one, who, unknown to herself, became essential to her happiness. But the time arrived when business required Mr. Hainlin's return to New Orleans.

"I may see your mother," said he. "Shall I tell her that you will join her next winter ?" He looked at the sable dress, and thought of the crimson of her mother's ball apparel, and with a shudder, of the awful night, when with forced courage, he had lured her from the fête. With hidden emotion he remembered that her passionate love had led her to follow him, and resolved to hold another conference with one whose acts in life had so deeply marked his destiny. He determined that the meeting should be such as to forbid any future betrayal of preference on her part for him.

With some reproach he felt that he had been often harsh

in his bearing towards her, but his conscience told him he was justified in the severity of his censure.

"I shall be lonely," said Jeanie, her eyes moistening. "What shall I do to occupy myself?"

"I need not advise you, for I think you aim to some definite purpose in your pursuits."

She looked her thanks for the expressed approbation, but the smile was regretful. She was where the air was sweet, pure, and healthful, and could again wander by the old loved brook, and with Arthur enjoy the hush and serenity of summer. Jeanie was now no idle dreamer. She knew that her existence was but a span, a probation in which she was to be cheerful and happy, enjoying the gifts of God, while she daily "labored in His vineyard;" and yet she clung to her monitor and guide.

"Will you walk with me? It will be my last opportunity for a long time, Jeanie."

The voice in which Mr. Hamlin spoke was deep with feeling. They bent their course towards a secluded path, shut out from the road by a thick grove of elms. For a while the silence of the two was unbroken. They were to part. Both felt keenly the separation, yet neither dared tell how much. Mr. Hamlin knew that Jeanie depended upon his judgment, and looked up to him for direction—that she regarded him as a friend; but he believed not that in her young breast he had awakened one emotion of love. After a long ramble, and much pleasant chat, he said: "I have some news for you—shall we sit down, and rest awhile in the old spot where I first saw you, Jeanie?" He drew a letter from his pocket. "I have startling intelligence in this; you must prepare your mind for a communication that may shock you. Would you hear of Ralph?"

"Nothing evil, I trust?" said Jeanie, with painful earnestness.

"Do not be agitated. You must know it." Mr. Hamlin read :

"DEAR PHILIP:

"You probably suppose me by this, on the rollicking waves of the Pacific, for such was your decree of banishment; but after you left New Orleans—craving your pardon—your imperial nod seemed no longer law, in view of the higher which Divinity has established in every kingly nature. Self, you know, was always my Emperor, and through the wisdom of the monarch Supreme, I learned that my destiny on earth was not fulfilled, until I had once more explored the Red River woods, and again enraptured my vision with the perfection of womanly beauty. Accordingly I reasoned myself into the belief, that nowhere could I be further out of the devil's temptations than at Judge Cameron's plantation—but, mark me, brother mine, I do not say out of an angel's. So, instead of revelling in the sunshine of the gorgeous Orient, or turning into a missionary among the little-eyed, long-tailed Chinese, or conforming more strictly to the letter of your instructions—bobbing for whales—I steered for the land of the warm-eyed damsel who has ever lived in my memory, if snugly tucked away as a *corps de reserve*.. So, here I am, enjoying the society of one of the most beautiful women this side of Houri land. And who ventures to deny that

'Love's feeling is more soft and sensible,
Than are the tender heads of cockled snails?'

Oh, Philip, how is it? does he not prove

— 'dainty Bacchus to be gross in taste?'

Well, however it may be with you, I come to the *summum bonum* of my epistle. Before the next Lord's day, God willing, beneath the walls of the forest's sanctuary, I shall espouse the fair Virginia, our bridal bower being lighted for the occasion by her majesty, Luna Regina. After the matrimonial obsequies, the happy pair will proceed forthwith to Turtle Hollow, and there sojourn till the wane of the honeymoon. Tell the sweet seraph, Jeanie—who will always be enshrined in the most thoroughly whitewashed corner of my heart—that I have at last secured a "Jinny," who loves me better than I deserve. But

I venture to impose upon her credulity, considering she has a *penchant* for a fellow a little wild, and has unbounded respect for the conqueror of a mustang. I enclose you a deed of some property for past *loans* from Mr. Miller's estate. My bride will possess a goodly portion of this world's plunder in a force of likely niggers. So, fancy me growing cotton with my respected father-in-law, and, if not taming myself, the wildest little Zingara that ever wore the bridal bit. She sends all the love she has to spare from her 'adored Ralph' to her sweet friend Jeanie. Felicitously,

"R. LARKFIELD."

"P. HAMLIN, Esq."

Jeanie did not look up during the perusal of the letter, and but a close observer would have noted that she changed color, if she occasionally smiled. Tumultuous thought, bringing back the hours when her cup for the time had brimmed with bliss (Ralph's presence the beaded sparkle of the nectar), awakened sweet, then painful memories. Before her vision came the beautiful smile, the eye whose melting power could alike subdue and alarm ; and on her brow she felt the touch of the rich locks, courting the play of her fingers, which the lover would ever have idling there. Then sweet and thrilling words chimed on her ear like music—warmer manifestations, tingling her blood, and brightening her cheek—till with Ralph, she laughed, mused and dreamed deliciously. The paper rustled in the hands of him who looked upon her face, with an intensity of expression no beholder could fathom. The sound restored her to herself, and to the consciousness that he, the loved one, was another's now ; and that she had sent him from her. Would she, if free recall him ? Rising tears brought to her heart its answer. Over her came the shadows of a death-bed scene causing her to remember, that while the sable wing of the destroyer there hovered, that she could not with her worldly idol then hold converse. Beneath rosy skies, and in flower wreathed bowers, to her he had been the sunshine of each gilded prospect : but had she not been sadly taught, that

the golden sands of life are fewest, and that through the wood of an earthly pilgrimage, it might be God's will, that she should travel oft a flinty path? Was not her heart, her resolution too faint to resist the beguiling voice and sterner mandate of one she must "love and obey?"—would it not be easier, less toilsome to follow the charmer up the shining roseate path, laughing at the grim phantoms peeping at her through the blooming garlands, than to listen to the voice of conscience? and when the night shadows came, perchance spreading far and wide, blackening and shrivelling like a scroll her youthful hopes, would she not then, wander hopelessly, with the gay being who profanely, irreligiously led her on? Shudderingly she shrank from the vision: her chosen one, must be a co-worker with her in the vineyard of Him, who is alike the Vine and the Branch.

The sun was going down. Fleecy cloudlets piled up, and rolled away in the evening sky; and beneath them girdled a zone of hills castling the canopy with towers of mighty strength. Slowly ontpeeped the silvery eyes of stars, as if angels might look therefrom upon the earth, the terraced garden of their crystal court.

The hour, the tranquillity of the scene, the thought which had made her brain reflective, had rendered her unconscious of the pain her tears and pensive abstraction cost her companion. And yet the liquid pearls but trembled in their welkin blue.

"Are you disappointed?" said she, rising to pick a leaf from a shrub.

"No—Jeanie, I am never disappointed in any movement of Ralph's. The greatest pain in this, is the pain I have caused you. The idol I see is not given up."

"Oh!" said Jeanie with winning frankness, "think me not so weak—I was but making a comparison for reflection. It ended well—we should have never been happy united.

I cannot lead—I must be helplessly guided onward, and would not I have sinned in casting reproach upon the religion I professed? I do not despair for him, for with 'God all things are possible,' but my poor wings would have drooped in the effort to elevate his; and had I less to forgive, I should have feared—agonizingly trembled in view of a union with Ralph. He will have a sweet wife——"

"And you can bless the betrothal?"

"Yes: strange that I should have believed he so much loved me!"

"He did, but not in the pure sense of the word—never when self was not uppermost."

"How can you tell?" said she, artlessly. "Did you ever love any one?"

"Jeanie, why do you torture me with that question?"

"Does it pain you?—is there any one long since dead, whose memory makes you sad?—or is she living?—won't you tell me?" The childlike appeal showed Mr. Hamlin that Jeanie was ignorant of the nature of his attachment for her.

"Yes, I will," said he, looking into her beautiful eyes. "I do love a little girl who is wholly insensible to my affection—who looks up to me as to an older brother, and who will soon forget me after I am gone away."

The eyes in the starlight opened wider, and were fixed upon the speaker as if with startled inquiry. Suddenly she lost possession of the little hand that had crept slowly from the arm on which it had rested.

"Yes," he resumed, "I love this sweet girl next to my God—I love her," his stern voice trembled with tenderness, "with a depth of feeling that drives me from her."

"Why?" was rather breathed than spoken, as the slight trembling form was clasped silently.

"She cannot—she does not love me. And without a return—even one word, I must go."

“What a foolish thing she is for you to love!” were words lisped as the young face, in its maiden blushes, was drawn persuasively nearer, hid in the little white hands, close to his breast.

“My little Pico! cannot it be?—may I hope? Am I not too old, too stern?”

Gently was the head raised—and the glowing face, with its roseate hue of shame, searched for a reply.

In a whisper came :

“I am nothing—only to you a little girl—no, no, you are not Ralph. I never knew the moment, when I could say to him, as now to you, ‘Yes, take me wholly in thy keeping.’ I might have more passionately loved, but as I would rather the pure mountain brook sang my lullaby, than that my veins ever trembled with the strains of wildest revelry, so I leave my heart with you.”

“It was too tempting to draw forth this confession,” the lover answered; “but supposing that before you existed, I had been enslaved by one more radiant—more beautiful—but never half so lovely, one that I must soon seek, could you still say ‘Yes?’”

“I can trust.” The tone of Jeanie showed her faith.

CHAPTER XXXIII

AT sunrise, the following morning, a tearful, blushing face looked forth from the same window where a little girl once stood to watch for her juvenile visitors, but now it was to catch the last glimpse of a form vanishing in the distance—a being to whom she had just bade farewell.

The youthful face, with its sweet, serious expression, turned with a sigh to meet the affectionate look of her brother, who drew her beside him on the old confidential sofa, and with pleasant raillery attempted to laugh away her tears.

“I am made very happy in this engagement, dear Jeanie,” said he; “and saved the painful solicitude attending a return to New Orleans. Oh! could I ever consent to your going again to your mother?”

“Arthur,” said Jeanie, painfully affected, “why have you been so unconfiding to your only sister—one who has always so fondly loved you? Why have you kept from me so reservedly your sorrows, and never breathed to me the cause of your separation from Mary?”

With a start, Arthur rose from his seat, and after hurriedly pacing the room, said:

“Mary may not be now among the living. Is not this cause enough?”

“No, Arthur, not for you, with your noble heart, to abandon her in her dying hour. Did you not love her faithfully?”

"Jeanie, do not harass me. I cannot explain. It was enough that we separated."

"Was there no alternative? Could you not have abandoned your little sister?"

"Jeanie! Who has been so cruel?"

"Do not ask me; it is sufficient that I know the cause of so much trial—but, my dear brother, I now plead for permission to go to this family, and if by any argument, any persuasion, any good deed, I can remove their prejudices, let me show them that they will not be dishonored by a connection with your sister."

"Never!" said Arthur, sternly, and impressively. "They have insulted you, and although poor Mary, in her misguided education, has innocently imbibed the prejudices of her bigoted teachers, still she is guilty in not openly ignoring their opinions, and boldly adopting and adhering to the relatives of him to whom she pledged her hand. Lack of resolution and moral courage has been her only fault; but I would not censure her; she has paid the penalty, I fear, it may be to the loss of her life."

"And you will not see her, knowing this?"

"Do you think, Jeanie, I would lower my sister so much? Mary, separated from her family, would have once entirely satisfied my heart; but under the domination of her rulers, she is like a reed shaken by the wind. Jeanie, one word of truth from her lips would have saved us both this misery—she from a broken heart, and I the consciousness and agony of having crushed it."

"Arthur! and have you suffered thus, and never told me! and I the cause?"

In accents of despair, Jeanie cried, "What can I do? How can I banish their ill-will, and save this terrible death?"

"Why should you attempt it, my priceless girl? you, who would be to them all an angel in their pathway—you, to

cause them disgrace ! No—no—say no more ; let her die in her willfulness. I would have saved her."

"Then you love her no more ?"

"Jeanie, Mary Middleton was, and is to me inexpressibly dear, and her affection beautiful and pure as her sweet face, but I would have seen her die a martyr's death, before I would have cast reproach by a look or concession, derogatory to the character of my sister."

"And you know not," said Jeanie, in a tone of anguish, "whether or not she is living ?"

"No ; but I would know who has tortured you with this tale of sorrow and mortification. Whoever it may be, deserves a badge of infamy."

"I shall never disclose my informant, but let me exculpate Mr. Hamlin."

"I have not suspected him—he could do nothing ignoble. There is but one objection to him in my eyes for your husband—he is too old for you."

"He does not seem so. He is then the better fitted to guide me in my inexperience."

"And does my little sister really love him ?" said Arthur, playfully, seeking the downcast eyes.

"I don't know, only I wish he was here again. Will he be gone so *very* long ?"

"A child still, Jeanie ! I hope not, if his coming will make you happier. You must remember the old bachelor will want to see some more permanent roses on the cheek of his young bride. You must not forget his instructions."

"What were they ?" said Jeanie, with a brightened complexion.

"To walk in the morning air daily, and—to be sure and write to him. I thought you might forget this last injunction."

"To see you happy, dear Arthur," Jeanie whispered, "would do more for the restoration of my health."

"Hush—no more," clasping the waist of his sister, "forget my destiny in the happiness of your own."

Until near morning, Jeanie talked to her Aunt Jane of Arthur, and his disappointment, while she bitterly bewailed the cause of so much sorrow. The following day she early consulted her faithful friend Keturah, who promised to bring her speedy information respecting the condition of Mary.

The report proved discouraging. The old man had had a paralytic fit, having been through the winter in a state of idiotic lunacy. Mrs. Middleton lay ill of typhus fever, and Mary seemed in a state of irremediable gloom, her health daily becoming worse. The villagers disliked the old folks so much, that it was difficult to procure nurses or watchers for them, and well as Mary was beloved, the situation of the family was such, they suffered for lack of aid.

"I will go to them," said Jeanie, "and try to do them good."

"Into that confection!—and give it to all of us! you know how 'fraid Mr. Flint is of infirmities. He says he never got over the cow-pox he cotched at camp meetin'?"

"I will be careful, and if I am ill, will procure a hired nurse, and stay at Mad River."

"No, you shan't neither—I'll come and take care of you, if it kills the old spider, if you will go—but I think it is very risky of you."

"You must help me in this matter, my good Keturah; I shall be opposed, perhaps ridiculed and ill treated when I arrive, but in this project I shall have much satisfaction."

To Keturah she did not state her worst fears, or make known the enmity of the Middletons toward her; but with tears and entreaties begged her benevolent aunt to aid her in her wishes.

"It will be useless," said the less courageous Jane, "they

will only scorn and insult you—you know nothing of their bitter feelings. I should tremble for you in this experiment."

"But oh, think of the inducement, dear aunt ; may I not do good to those who hate me ? and perhaps be able to remove this ill feeling, so that Arthur and Mary may be united. Must I," she continued, "let such an opportunity pass when I might be so essentially useful ?" The young Christian with ardent zeal, panted for warfare in some field of action. She knew she would be sternly opposed by Arthur, and perhaps occasion Mr. Hamlin deep anxiety. Would this course obtain for her the "roses" which he playfully and lovingly told her she must wear, when he met her again ? Instead, might she not fade and droop with weariness, if she escaped the fever ? She had resolved she would, if in her power, each day revive some drooping spirit, and animate some feeble resolution to struggle on against the adverse winds and tides of fortune—was it for her to choose the task ? Might not poor Mary suffer for the lack of that sympathy for which she had yearned ? Was it for her to consider that she was deemed unworthy the office ? Was not our Saviour spit upon in His holiness, why then should she, so great a sinner, escape opprobrium ?

Such was the groundwork of her arguments. To do good to those who hated and despised her, it required all her courage to confront opposition at home, and the enmity and prejudices of those she would assist in their need. She looked at the reflection of her still pale features, and doubted whether the state of her health was commensurate with the task she would undertake. Jeanie sighed to think that months would pass before she should see him who had been her arbiter in times of doubt and indecision. Then she remembered that he had commended her for acting from some definite aim and purpose. Should he be disappointed ?

She walked forth at twilight, the evening after he had

left her, and involuntarily to little Pico's grave. Blushing, she remembered he had called her by the name of her pet. The memory caused her happiness ; it was a name dear and sweet. She felt the consciousness of a noble desire in the resolution she had formed ; the spirit of her father seemed to hover over her, saying in the words of Jesus, "Love your enemies"—"do good to them that hate you." She knew that it was right for her to enjoy the inhalation of sweet flowers by the wayside, but when she was called into a rugged path, where thorns grew instead, that she must not turn aside lest she should feel their poisonous prick.

The following morning, after leaving a note for Arthur, Jeanie departed for Mad River. She nerved herself to enter, expecting a rebuff, but determining to return a soft answer to one of wrath.

She received a querulous reply to "come in," from the voice of the sick woman, who was chiefly nursed by a noisy group who had ever feared her too much in health, to feel much solicitude for her in illness. The old man sat nearly helpless in a rocking-chair, one half of his body being benumbed with palsy, and his brain partially deranged—lunacy exhibited by his efforts to strike different objects within reach, fancying them children, while he addressed them as such.

In a remote part of a large room, lay Mary, the gentle invalid, whose sole thoughts seemed bent upon a package of Arthur's letters, which she held in her hand, never parting with them even at night.

Her form was wasted, and daily grew thinner without cough or pain. Her face was spiritually beautiful, having gained a cast of intellectual thought that she had not possessed while in perfect health. A raw and rude specimen of a Yankee girl did the work of the household, and with little apparent feeling for the sick. Watchers had been appointed in rotation by the villagers at night, but during the day the family lacked assistance.

The physician and clergyman occasionally called on the Middletons, but so ungracious had been their reception at first, their visits were subsequently reluctantly paid, and, but for Mary, would have been discontinued.

Without inquiry or comment, Jeanie made herself useful.

The jargon of the old man alarmed her, but seeing he was helpless, she soon ceased to regard him ; but to the incessant complaints and cries of Mrs. Middleton for assistance, she found her services in active requirement. If she attempted to bathe her head, she would ask her if she wished to put fire-brands upon it, and invariably declared that poison seasoned all her medicines and drinks. She often threw them in the face of Jeanie, and but for the resolute and firm entreaties of her nurse, would not have taken any prescribed. She was too ill at first to note who was about her bed, but as she began to convalesce under Jeanie's incessant watching, she became curious to know to whom she had been so much indebted.

Mary, in the meanwhile, had been won by the sweet attentions and words of Jeanie, who read to, and cheered the gentle girl with her conversation, while she gratified her taste with the flowers which she daily culled and laid on her pillow ; and when wearied with all else, would read and sing to her. At times Mary would look with painful earnestness, and once caught her hand, while she said : " Oh ! that was Arthur's voice ! Arthur's look ! "

" And you could not," said Jeanie, " love me if I was Arthur's sister ? "

" Oh, if she was like you ! but no—she is a wicked being ; one that tampers with evil spirits, and they say is so beautiful, that it is dazzling and fearful to see her. It is dreadful to think one so good and noble as my Arthur, should be so deluded as to follow her, and her dangerous mother—but he will die as his father did, and be taken from her."

Jeanie humored the delusion which had become seemingly unconquerable, and by unwearied devotedness soothed and nursed the affectionate, misguided misanthrope, until gratefully and lovingly the fond girl would throw her arms about her neck, and cry, saying that she wished Arthur had such a sister.

But not thus pleasant was the task of waiting upon the exacting, imperious mother, who, as she improved, accused her of every underhanded device to retard her recovery, and who, if left temporarily by Jeanie, would condemn her for cruelty, and a desire to afflict her, because she was appointed by Heaven to be the greatest living martyr.

"Our Saviour was patient in long suffering," said Jeanie.

After receiving much abuse for her "ignorance," and "miserable nursing," Jeanie finally told her that she believed she must leave them—that she was too young and inexperienced to comfort her.

"I suppose you expect to be paid?" said Mrs. Middleton, as she for the first time sat up in her chair, to which she had been aided by Jeanie.

"Yes," replied the youthful nurse, "with some appreciation of my motives at least, in coming to you."

"Is that all, my dear?" said the mollified patient; "well, this is a little more of the good Samaritan than I expected to see in Mad River; but maybe you didn't come from this section? I've scolded you some, because it is my way, and when I am sick, it is the only course I can take to make people step around; but you do not seem to be governed by fear, or any other reason that I can find out. It isn't because you like us, that you have come to catch the fever, is it?"

"I came to do you good—is not this sufficient inducement?"

"But such angels don't visit Mad River, and my house

unawares ; but I won't quarrel with you any longer, for you haven't been much in the way, if you are ignorant ; and what is more, don't want any pay for it."

"Yes I do," said Jeanie, with a sweet, arch look, while she brought the dictatorial lady a cup of tea, "I want you to acknowledge that I am not a beautiful, designing sprite of mischief, but nothing but a simple country girl, who would gladly do you any service that comes within the pale of a Christian's duty, not forgetting that one of them is to 'pray for them which despitefully use you.'"

"Well, Miss Mysterious, while you comb out my snarled hair, I'll talk to you ; your fingers are so soft, they feel nice on my weak head. You don't pull, either, as Betsey Washburn does, and while you are about I want you to say over some of the Scripture you did when you thought I was going to die."

"I don't remember," said Jeanie, commencing her work, "but I believe I told you when you were getting better, and censuring so bitterly some of the villagers for not fulfilling their duties, that of the Christian graces the Bible says, the greatest is Charity ; and that we are also told to judge not, lest we be judged. We have no evidence in all Christ's demeanor, or trials, that He ever was impatient. I think—do you not ?—that it is wicked to be harsh and rude."

"Well, I declare, I never thought it was sinful ; but now I remember St. Peter says, 'be courteous,' and I suppose it ain't in everybody to be so strict in religion as I be ; and now I'm so feeble I can see that folks can't always go through thick and thin to mind their souls, as I do when I'm well."

"What do you mean by being strict in religion ?"

"You do pin one up so close ; why, I mean walking a crack yourself, and seeing that your neighbors do."

"If you mean by leading others by your walk and con-

versation to follow a good example, then we agree on this point ; but I believe we should first pluck out the 'beam.' ”

“ Well, one thing I'll agree to, that you've touched me on a tender point ; and I ain't offended either, but there ain't a man, woman or child in Mad River, that would have dared to doubted my godliness, but you've cut and bled me like a good surgeon, without hurting ; and now I want to know who you be, and I'll agree after this, to let other people's religion rest, while I look some after my own, and see if I hadn't better start with the sins of my tongue. Tell me what I can do for you, to begin with.”

“ I wan't you to make your poor child happy, by removing from her mind the prejudice you have created against the sister of her lover.”

“ What that awful creetur ? it can't be, that such a little good thing as you be—little Methodist with your plain satin hair, and pretty face, can like such bedizened people, with their tires, wimples and tinkling cymbals—leading such awful lives as they do down in Orleans ?”

“ Don't you think that one can be a good Christian in New Orleans ?”

“ Well, it would be a tight pinch I think.”

“ I have heard there the best of sermons, and known many devout Christians who lead as consistent lives, as those out of the temptation of a gay city. The light of such shines the brighter, in contrast.”

“ Well, I believe I shall have to give in, that there is good people everywhere, and that we must not believe all we hear bad of folks—but I always make up my mind by a squint or a hearsay.”

“ We certainly must not bear false witness or be governed by willful prejudices. Are you now,” said Jeanie, seating herself on a low seat, and taking the hand of the convicted woman, “ ready to own me as your friend, and

sister in Christ, though I profess to be this same odious Jeanie Miller, that you have hated so?"

With a wild look of astonishment, Mrs. Middleton heard Jeanie's explanation, and put her hands before her eyes, through which tears fell; then with a shaking of her still weak form, she bent over the young head that leaned forward on her lap, and said, "Well, I'm beat, this is too much for human nature to believe."

"And you would not spurn me now for Mary's sister?"

The agitated woman, with her strong will and domineering spirit, could control no longer the flood of emotion and gratitude that swelled at her heart. She wept like a child. Becoming composed, she said:

"We have treated him and you so scurrilously; and Mary is dying, too, of a broken heart—oh dear!"

"The same day Mary was convinced that their sweet nurse and benefactor was Arthur's sister. The intelligence was like rain to the parched floweret.

"You would not commiserate my situation, could you look in upon me, dear Arthur," wrote Jeanie. "The house of affliction and gloom for which I left you, is now one of happiness and joy. It would do your kind heart good to witness the change. As I sit by the window of the little fragrant parlor, where you and Mary have held communion, before me is the dear invalid, whom I have dressed and propped in her easy-chair, that she might, like myself, enjoy the fragrant smell of the clover and new mown hay. Could you now look upon the sweet face from which every cloud of distrust is chased—so perfect is her faith in your constancy—you could not resist the happiness of making it permanent, by a speedy return to her; and by the fulfillment of vows, so nearly broken by the strong rooted prejudice of her mother.

"Could you have seen this stern woman weep for the wrong she had done me, you would be softened in your asperity against her. Poor Mary has been a monomaniac on this point, but is now satisfied that the bugbear of her dreams is no more, and night and day clasps me to her heart as her beloved sister. I have not forgotten all your multitudinous objections against my coming, and in truth there have

been times when I have wept from weariness and impatience with my trials as a nurse; but I was comforted even then, and said to my yearning heart, which craved more cheerful companionship; have faith in God. And have I not now my reward? It is true I am ill—feeble for want of rest; I pine for my long walks, and for the enjoyment of my books and music, and more than all else, for time to write to Mr. Hamlin, who knows not of my confinement. But the battle is over; my efforts to please, no longer meet rebuffs or quarrelsome opposition—my night and day watching is no longer received as that of a hired menial—but gratitude and patience breathe in every thankful word, from her who was so lately my worst enemy. The old man is declining fast; he has dropped his stick, and is even content I should wait upon him, without suspicion that I mean to do him harm.

“Mrs. Middleton is fast recovering. The house through my directions has been purified; and I think with safety, you can come and see Mary. I shall remain through the week, and then return to the farm to recruit my health. May I not hope you will travel with the dear invalid and myself, for our mutual benefit?

“Your devoted sister,

“JEANIE.”

It was not without fierce and bitter struggles with his pride, that Arthur Miller could forgive those who had so traduced his sister; but love conquered in the conflict, and in the reunion with the sweet fragile girl who, from excess of joy fainted on his heart, he was repaid for his sufferings.

The following week, Arthur and Mary with Jeanie started on a bridal tour—preparations being made during their absence, by good Aunt Jane, for their future home at Castlemont.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

MR. FLINT had returned from a journey West, whither he had gone to "get rid of the funeral," it being privately surmised, that he was jealous lest in a time of so much excitement he should be lost sight of.

"The same old sixpence," vociferated Miss Sprunt, dragging in over Mink's black tail the old yellow trunk, which was fast getting bald, and out of nails—all wholly visible being the remains of a brass Z ambushed in scant hair. Keturah scolded, but was inwardly elated at the return of one in whom she began to take evident interest. Immediate requisition was made for her sympathy, the bachelor having imprudently spent the money she had lent him in commodities useless to her.

"Don't you see how heavy it is?" said the drug-laden Zebedee, aside. "Well, it is full of articles. I bought 'em cheap." Then with a wink to Keturah, he promised to expose to her his purchases, among which was a "span new ratinet" for herself. He had also brought home with him all he promised in the way of news, keeping her in an unbecoming state of explosive merriment, for an indefinite period, with his accounts of matrimonial offers and proposals made to him, besides his disasters and speculations, in which he pronounced himself a sufferer from fraud.

It was comforting to the damsel, although she had her own way of showing her satisfaction, that Mr. Flint was where he could warm without any "pizenous niggers and Irish." And it did her good, to see how he heated one foot and then

the other, and turned himself, not minding the position of his chair legs or his own. She concluded he wanted to be heated "through, and even," and it was perhaps pleasant to any one, who had the same feelings as Keturah Sprunt, to see how comfortable he could make himself, and how remarkable it was to one of her temperament, that he could bear so much fire. She could only account for the enigma by the supposition that he had been generously toasted when he was little.

Still there were times when she was not so complacent ; when she would barricade his corner with black pots and kettles, and put saucers of molasses around to catch flies, which had ever made him feel unpleasantly, since he fell into it.

In vain Keturah hunted among the choice variety in Mr. Flint's trunk, for the promised ratinet, and when she was compelled to believe that he had left it in the cars, she almost abandoned the idea of marrying such a "shiftless hunk."

The old people, who were more infirm and anxious-minded, on some points, began to be discouraged with Zebedee's increasing indolence, and indiscreet expenditure of what little income he had, and agreed with Jane that his best course was to marry Keturah, who would "look to him," and keep him, after they were gone, from coming upon the town.

Jane had for some time observed Keturah's secret liking for Zebedee, and the great inconsistency in her love for his society, and her abuse of him. Her settlement was a matter of interest to all, she having been in the family since Pharaoh Sprunt's second marriage, owing to her uncongeniality of disposition with his second wife. In a lucrative point of view, as a family, they did not consider Zebedec an eligible match ; but if the matter of attachment was made conclusive, Jane thought she could make him comfortable by a marriage settlement.

All, therefore, which remained to be done, was to acquaint the parties that the only obstacle to their happiness was removed.

Jane's first talk was with Keturah, who declared she had vowed never to marry a man she had to "train"—besides she "hated hen-huzzys;" but when she heard about the annuity, she abused him less, and testified that she could always say one good thing of Mr. Flint—that he never "cracked up for more than he was worth."

Jane next conferred with Zebedee, who confessed that he had been expecting Keturah would take encouragement from his sitting in the kitchen—as if it wasn't his fire as much as hers—he sometimes thought he would give up chimney-corner comforts if he couldn't warm his feet without being "snaked into all kinds of difficulties." "As for Keturah Sprunt," he continued to Jane, "she's besot me for ten years: and now she wants to be my death, getting me into another scrape." He didn't like trying "new-fangled ways of living"—he was "bad off enough as he was."

But when Jane took up the argument, and acquainted the bachelor with the pecuniary prospects in store for him, a vision of a fireplace, full of his own bread and ashes, elated him; and having indistinct notions that Keturah by becoming his wife, would lose the power to scold, his mouth gradually extended at the corners, and as if in conference with some individual behind it, semi-circled his head, and gasped assent, muttering in the depths below, that it was "nobody's business" if he did "marry such a 'big thing' as Keturah Sprunt."

So for a month, little was talked of at the farm, but the wedding that was to take place—though if joked about it, Zebedee would declare the report of his engagement a fabrication, generally prefacing his greeting to his friends, by a stout denial of the fact. Still he was oftener than ever in

the cheese room, where he spent much of his time discharging apple and pumpkin seeds at his intended bride.

"Won't you be pesky glad to get some one to take care of you and do the providin'?" said he in one of his most amiable moods; "won't you get fat as butter?"

"I guess," replied Keturah, "it will be the day of Pentecost afore you'll do that, but I tell you—stop that are snappin'—if I stick on to you, you've got to buckram up, and not go lopping round, as if your muscles was loose; if it hadn't a-been you was so hitched on to the Seldens, I'd a-seen you hung afore I'd a bothered with you; why land o' Goshen, if it hadn't a-been you was legitimized by Miss Jane, you couldn't a provided a father-long-legs for dinner."

"Now, Keturah, that ain't fair, after you've beset me so long—you know working hard don't agree with me, and as you are so big (it ain't as if I was goin' to marry a small woman) why we oughter been helped and set out afore."

"Shut your mouth about a small woman."

But the big mouth did not obey, but with a convulsive wriggle, opened wider, and finally went into an alarming cachination.

"Jerusalem! don't swallow me alive."

"Aw! now, Keturah!" the bachelor grew affectionate, "make up—and jest this once—don't be so hateful."

"You get out—don't make me sick, Mr. Flint—Lor, now don't, Mr. Flint."

It was Zebedee's wish to be married "on the sly," but such a wedding did not accord with her ideas of respectability, so the matter, much to the bachelor's relief, was deferred for a month.

In the meantime, Keturah's preparations for housekeeping were going on, and so much was she absorbed with towels and pillow cases, she was less observant of her intended husband's movements, whom she supposed occupied in

getting a cow and pig, also a wedding suit-money having been furnished him for the purpose ; besides funds to purchase a small house and some hens.

As he was always home in "sparking" season, she was not alarmed or jealous of his devotion to a new male acquaintance which he had formed—a peddler by profession. She, as well as the rest of the family, observed that he held many private conferences with him in his room, and in the woodshed, also that they took rides together, but as through this intimacy, Keturah obtained more house linen, and compensation for her lost ratinet, she was on the whole pleased with the friendship.

Thus matters progressed until the appointed wedding day, when much to the amazement and horror of the family, Mr. Flint did not appear at breakfast ; and on examination of his premises the discovery was further made, that he and his yellow trunk had gone, and the sole light that could be obtained upon the subject was that the peddler's wagon was seen to leave the yard some time in the night.

"And all that cow money !" ejaculated the forsaken, Keturah. "I'll be strung up if I'd a had him if he'd a staid to hum—the roasted serpent !"

CHAPTER XXXV.

“ **D**ID you give Mrs. Miller my card?” said Mr. Lawrence to the servant at the door of his old friend.

“ I did, she is not at home.”

The gentleman concluded that the lady was “ insane.”

Fearing remarks upon the dejection of spirits which she could not conceal, Mrs. Miller at first arrayed herself in attire conspicuous for its gaiety and richness, and rode out daily. Returning from one of her drives, after having for several weeks declined the visits of Mr. Lawrence, she received the following note :

“ **M**Y BEAUTIFUL FRIEND:

“ Having presented myself often of late, at the door of your mansion, and not finding your ladyship ‘at home,’ I have concluded to state to you the *multum in parvo* of my intentions. It is so so, for a man of society to have an *affaire de cœur* with a woman of *ton*, living on terms of equivocal friendship with an absconding partner, but the accomplished Mrs. M., must be sufficiently worldly wise and discreet, to know that a friendship so amiable, does not involve the responsibilities and hazards attending the bestowal of the same, upon the afflicted widow of the Benedict deceased. Such imprudence Mr. Launcelot L. would consequently avoid, and preserve unsullied his prospects matrimonial.

“ The undersigned therefore concludes to drop reluctantly, the outdoor acquaintance of the accomplished and afflicted, but should she again conclude to sacrifice her charms at the Hymeneal altar, Mr. Launcelot L. would be happy to tender his services to relieve the

aforesaid from any domestic difficulties, fully appreciating all complimentary annexing privileges.

“Once your obedient, now your lamenting friend,

“LAUNCELOT LAWRENCE.

“To MRS. ELINOR MILLER.”

Mrs. Miller bit her lip with rage. Hastily tearing the note of her admirer, she destroyed it, and sought other communications. She found upon her table the following addressed in an almost unrecognizable hand to her daughter :

“JINNY MILLER:

“I thought mebbe you’d come back to this blasted mean town, and as I’m sick at a tavern, where there’s nothing but niggers and no other conveniences, and gettin one of my poor turns, I don’t hesitate to invite you to call and take care of me. You are the nearest connection I know about, in this distressed country.

“Yours in great hurry,

“Z. FLINT.”

Mrs. Miller read and re-read this strange epistle with feelings of new excitement. Agonized as she had been with the conviction of the utter uselessness of her life; still wretched with remorse, with a feeling of relief she felt that she had now an opportunity to do good. By seeking this vulgar inmate of her husband’s old home, and relieving his distress, she could perform an act perhaps not unworthy of the pure eyes that might look from on high upon her.

She had never seen Mr. Flint, but had heard of him, and felt that the lower the object relieved, the greater was her condescension and the sacrifice she made to benefit him.

Thus she imagined to appease a suffering conscience. She resolved to be open in the matter, and inquire without reserve for the humble and degraded invalid. Zaidee was in her confidence and made acquainted with her present plan, who felt deeply disgraced by the proceeding, which she pronounced “a berry low bisness,” her pride however not

reaching the acme of mortification until the carriage of her mistress stopped at the door of an obscure boarding house.

Bent on fulfilling her task, Mrs. Miller determined to be condescendingly kind, and to proceed immediately to the room of the sufferer, to ascertain fully his condition. Zaidee followed, not daring to disobey, but as if she had for ever lost caste by the disgrace of the movement.

"A sick Yankee stopping here, do you want, madam?" replied the servant to the inquiry of the lady for Mr. Zebedee Flint.

"Mr. Flint," said Mrs. Miller with dignity.

"He be onspectable Missis, me hab no doubt. I no 'pinion ob dem Yankee," said Zaidee expostulately.

"Show me to his room."

"He has no less than five quacks, and as many peddlers with him now," said the waiter. "Shall I not take him your message, madam?"

"I will go to his room."

Proceeding to the door of our absconding friend, who had been beguiled on the eve of his nuptials, to go South on a peddling trip, among boxes, trunks and bundles, she found the invalid—bottles, liniments and plasters strewed around him. Dressed in the same habiliments in which he left the North, he made a novel impression upon his visitors.

As the door opened, a couple of men with large packs passed. Seeing the waiter followed by strangers, the bachelor jumped from his seat, as if from the invasion of robbers, and called out :

"Nigger! what did you say?—is Jinny Miller coming?"

"Dunno mars'r—I deliver de note, and dis leddy arribe."

Zebedee started hurriedly, at the same time huddling into an open trunk his "traps," and quack medicines, breaking in his haste several bottles which emitted not otto

of rose. Seating himself astride of the whole, on one end of the trunk he looked at Mrs. Miller and her companion with a nod and a stare of defiance. The latter finally spoke.

"A note came from you to my daughter, asking her aid for severe illness, and as you are a stranger in the city, and known to me by reputation, I have come as her substitute, to render you such assistance as lies in my power. You are probably better than when you wrote."

"Well, marm, if this ain't the biggest kind of impersi-
tion I've suffered yet in this warm town. You say you've
heard of me by repertation, and I'm bold to say, I have
heered of you the same way, which ain't any of the likeliest,
marm ; but if you was fit society for me to entertain, I'd
be lummoxed if I'd be at the expense : I come away from
hum with better than five hundred dollar, and I've lost it
all indorsing it away for property that won't sell. I've got
somethin' in this trunk, but it ain't a cow nor a pig, nor
weddin clothes, as I expected the speculation would turn
out. Besides there's Keturah Sprunt disappointed, cause
she hain't nabbed me, and I better have had her, than to
have beer so cheated. I've given up the acquaintance of
all females—they are the meanest kind o' creation. But if
they wasn't, I wouldn't risk myself with you, and this
yallow lady. I don't expect to remain in this awful place,
so you might as well go down sly, the back way. I knew
Jinny was used to my cricks, and knowed how I was rubbed
and plastered, so I consented to have her come and nuss
me, but there's no kind of affliction I think you are good
for, so I can't employ you any way."

"Mr. Flint," said Mrs. Miller, controlling her rising
anger, and more than ever humbled, "a sense of duty
has only sent me here, but I am convinced you are not
dangerously ill, and that I can be of no use to you, but if

you should need assistance, by applying to me, you w receive aid."

Zaidee had been growing stiffer since the conversation commenced ; she now threw back her turbaned head and remarked :

" Missus muss be obercome, she better go out sich low place."

" Set down, yaller woman. Miss Miller, I've just tho't what you are after, but it ain't no use. I'm beset with widders—allers was, but I tell you I ain't a marrying man—that, Keturah Sprunt knows, and if ever I make up my mind to bargain with a woman, it will be to an exemplary character, so I can't encourage you nor this brown female either."

Mrs. Miller became now fully convinced of the man's insanity, and thought it would be an act of benevolence to have him sent to an asylum. But as he seemed harmless, she did not alarm Zaidee, but still sat contemplating what she had best do.

" Do you suffer much ?" she questioned.

" Well, marm, I should think I did, but I guess I'm a settin' on ingredients enough to cure me. I think it would be a relief to some people I know, to have the information I've got on back complaints, lettin' alone the stuff I've got packed in this ere trunk. Them nabobs that went out of here, have kept me in a constant supply, and given me enough to trade myself home on."

" How does the climate agree with you ?"

" Why don't you ask me how I like mud and spiders ? It's rained like sixty ever since I came, and what the wasps and hornets have left of me, has lost its energy relaxing away. As for my cash its e'enmost gone, putting my skin into nigger's hands, to keep over night, in this thieving community."

"Missis endanger her life here," put in the now wrathful Zaidee. "He giv you goss."

"Do they lock you up nights?" inquired Mrs. Miller, compassionately.

"I locks myself up—there's one time when I'm safe : but if ever I get home, I'll settle down on what I've got, and give up business, and all kinds o' speculating. There's Keturah Sprunt, I'm going to have a fortune for marrying her. How long is it since you and your man quit keepin' company?"

"He's gettin' sassy," whispered Zaidee.

"I do not see as I can benefit him any," said Mrs. Miller, sighing.

"I'd like to have you go out peaceful, marm, and not creak or squeak—I'm particular what company I keep."

"When are you fed?"

"Well, I feeds with the rest when the nigger begins his thunder, but I don't depend altogether on the cooked lizards I gets here : well, marm, you ain't in a hurry—be you?"

"Missis—me tink you side yoursel' sociatin' wid such scum."

"Poor unfortunate!" sighed Mrs. Miller, as Mr. Zebedee Flint slammed the door after his visitors and locked himself in.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

MRS. MILLER returned home dissatisfied and more wretched than before her visit to one she now believed demented. She knew not why, but she felt even by the condemnation received, humiliated. Zaidee was in despair. She took little satisfaction in arranging her mistress, whose display-drives were finally discontinued, while she daily sunk into deeper dejection. Listless she remained in her dressing-room, sitting through the day, caring for nought, doing nothing, and seeing nought, but in imagination the corpse of her husband—hearing nothing but his last words, which were burned as if by fire into her brain.

But the settlement of the estate gave rise to matters requiring her attention, when she was compelled to arouse from her lethargy, and confer with Mr. Hamlin.

On his arrival at New Orleans, he called upon her at her dwelling, and found her like some object inanimate. She was dressed in a loose gown of grey, wearing on her neck the emblems of the Romanist faith. She went daily to mass, and came home but to fast and indulge her misery. Her features had become colorless, and in the folds of white cambric tied over her head, she looked a Beatrice. Mr. Hamlin was much impressed with the change. She did not rise to receive him, but pointed to a chair, while she seated herself upon one hard and uncomfortable.

He observed, as the door of her private room opened, that she had just come from her oratory, where a large cross,

and a picture of the Virgin were mostly conspicuous. Paintings, and images of saints were about the room.

"I am sorry not to see you looking in better health," said Mr. Hamlin. "I left Jeanie well. Do you not propose to join her at the North this summer?"

"Never again on earth, and if you have aught of a worldly nature to say, do it quickly—my time is short for such vanities. I have chosen a vocation that will make me insensible to all ties of kindred."

"Well, then, we will recur to business; you know that Mr. Miller left you half of his estate."

"I shall bestow a requisite sum upon the convent in which I shall pass my life, the rest return to the children of Mr. Miller. But," the color now flushed the cheek of the pale woman, "I must first clear my conscience of its burden, and make a confession that cannot now add to my humiliation. Before I take the veil that will shroud me from the world, I would expose fully the secrets of my heart to one who has occupied it, that I may be more openly purged from sin at the holy confessional."

"Madam, I beg of you to say no more; it is not necessary."

"Yes, I must tell you that I would have perilled my existence to have won your love. I would not say this, but that I am on the borders of an earthly grave, and about to enter the vestibule to the court of heaven."

"Elinor, I would likewise divulge some secrets; the circumstances under which I am placed compel me to do so."

"Secrets to me?"

"Do you not remember," said Philip Hamlin, "a boy who loved you in your girlhood?"

"Hugh? Have I ever forgotten him? It is well I knew that he was dead; I gave him up for the gold that I now resign as I would the dust under my feet."

"You did not think you might make life a burden to him, destroying his energies for long years?"

"He was poor. I could not wait for wealth. At times I might have fancied him your younger brother—and yet how different! Oh! had he lived!"

"Would he, think you, have taken to his heart one"—

"Who wrecked the peace of her husband?—say it all. I am humbled now, or I could not have told you this, my weakness. You struck the fatal blow when you kindled my brow with shame, before my brain reeled with horror. Yes, yes—I know that I am not worthy of Hugh, even had he lived to have seen me penitent. He would not know me in this grey gown." Mrs. Miller smiled bitterly.

"Is the heart greyer for a monkish garb? Is this serge more holy adorning than the gew-gaws you have cast aside? Oh! Elinor, discard these outward symbols, and with the eye of faith, look to your Redeemer."

"How else can I humiliate myself?"

"Do you think of yourself to make expiation? Are you not satisfied with the ransom by which you can purchase Heaven?"

"Am I—even I, an heir of Heaven?"

"Could you die for your child, and not love it? I speak to you truth positive and absolute—not with conjecture, but with the testimony of God Himself. The features of Christianity are broad and clear—its facts and doctrines are marked to the eye of a child. The speculations of human philosophy cannot baffle it, the refinement and subtle reasoning of skeptics may bewilder, but whoever reads the Divine Revelation, must on its pages see the mind of Deity emblazoned as the sun in the cloudless heavens. Leave all shadows, perplexities, and riddles, and go to the inspired oracles for light."

"My mind has lost its enthusiasm"

"Do you not misjudge it? Have you not served the gods of your idolatry with zeal? Yes, pardon me, like a great man, you may wish you had served the God of Heaven as well."

"I may err, but it seems that through the dark vista of my mind, light is dawning."

"I believe you will," said Mr. Hamlin, with more warmth and regard, than he had ever manifested, "yet lay hold of the cross invisible, and no longer kiss its emblem; that you will in your heart, pray, casting aside your beads. Hitherto, I have coldly addressed you," taking her hand; "but do you think I feel no interest in the spiritual welfare of one I *once* loved?"

"Once loved!" Mrs. Miller looked eagerly, with strained vision, into the eyes bent upon her.

"Look at me, Elinor—is there no trace left in my face of Hugh Shelbourne?"

"Oh! my God! can it be true? do I see him in Philip Hamlin? he who once so loved me, and whose scorn I have since merited!" Burying her face in her hands, the blood mounted to her temples, to pass away. "No, no," she continued, "it cannot be—how young and handsome he was! But now—dead! yes, I have long believed him so. Can he be so changed to me—oh! better that I had been left my dream!"

"Elinor, look at this miniature that you returned to me! Is this no proof? Compare it with the original!"

With trembling astonishment, Elinor Miller took from his hand the resemblance she had worn in her girlhood; and with eyes wildly searching, glanced from the painting to the man. The brow, the eyes were the same, but the youthful beauty there pictured, had changed into the harsh lines of stern and inflexible manhood. Intellectual power was enthroned on the classic temples, where once the wave of beautiful hair was chiefly conspicuous. Around the mouth in

the picture, a smile was seen ; sadder, graver, but more soulful, was now that feature on the mature, thoughtful face ; and instead of the complexion warm as the glow of the ruddy peach, a settled and clear paleness contrasted with the dark beard of the man of six and thirty years. But to Elinor Miller this contrast was not the greatest. Where was now the glance of passionate love ? where the tones of musical fondness, that had made her young heart joyous ?

She looked, and met the eye of a faithful friend—the lover was among the dreams of the past.

“I see that I bewilder you, and that you mark the change that time and circumstances have wrought ; more than this you marvel that Hugh Shelbourne should be Philip Hamlin ! I must leave you now, and will write to you, for I have a precious boon to ask. Not for the love I once prized, that would be but mockery now ;—but I see you are ill.”

“Go, Mr. Hamlin—no longer Hugh—go and never, *never* may we meet again.”

“Yet,” taking the cold hand, “and yet be friends. Farewell—you will hear from me.”

The next day, Mrs Miller read the following :

“It is strange, Elinor, to communicate with one who was once the idol of my life, and who is now placed far from me by the events of intervening years. It is not essential to the purport of this epistle, that we recall vividly the days previous to our separation, though they may be the most brilliant threads in the woof of the history I would relate. The ten years subsequent to those days are to you involved in darkness. Let me throw light upon them. Driven from you by the annulment of a contract between us, which then seemed to me binding as the silver cord that unites the soul and body, I fled. Stunned by the blow, it cost me an effort to rouse my energies to action ; and to remain near you, wedded to another, then seemed unbearable.

" You may recollect that my mother was English, and that although a native of America, I was considered the heir by adoption of my grandfather, a resident of Liverpool. My childhood was passed with an aged relative by whom I was educated, with the expectation of inheriting at his death his estates, which patrimony was to be bestowed on the conditions that I remained with him and finally adopted his name. I returned to visit my mother after her second marriage and there met you. You know as well as myself the result of that acquaintance. In my boyish ardor wealth was no consideration, including the condition by which I inherited it—separation from you. I wrote to my grandfather declaring my passion for an unportioned American girl. My arguments with him were vain to obtain his consent to my marriage.

" I then resolved to abandon my home and expectations, and earn a subsistence. I believed that I had the ability to support you, and with the stimulus offered as my reward, I defied all obstacles to our connection. My patron was enraged with the project, and disinheritance I knew was my inevitable portion. Lulled by the witchery of hours passed in your society, life was one of fairy beauty. What was gold in my estimation to the love of my idol? My existence was a fervid dream, but of your characteristics or principles I knew nothing. That you charmed me I only felt.

" But, Elinor, when you told me with words icy and cold, that our engagement was null and void—'child's play,' I resolved to embark for home. My grandfather reinstated me in his affections, and in my former position. At twenty-one I adopted his name, the one I bear, and at his death inherited his fortune. For three years I was wretched, misanthropic and indifferent to the society of either sex. You knew that my attentions to you were an earnest of my truth; I felt when you trifled with my hopes and made void your promises, that you were guilty of falsehood.

I now know that I should have judged you less harshly—and I did, as my indignation and disappointment cooled.

“ My character was as unformed as your own. My education had given me a taste for argument and debate, and being gloomy, my thoughts turned within, and fed upon my own wild imaginings. I examined various creeds, and in the German schools imbibed notions of philosophy which seemed to me the only religion consistent with a reasoning, logical mind. I explored many channels of literature to find a basis, on which to build a dome to rest. But I dug and searched in vain. With heroic confidence I would seize upon what I believed a rock of granite foundation, but to see it vanish like an airy cloud. In vain I sought for the light of Truth. In the stars I saw hidden effulgence, and felt that to my heart, they spoke rapturous music—but light and music undefined. I had no faith in anything. Groping in the mazes of superstitious belief, and in metaphysical speculations, I became a dreamer and a dissatisfied idealist. The God of the Christian seemed to my perverted and darkened mind a being inconsistent in His attributes; and consequently, not one worthy of adoration and worship. I could not reconcile the condemnation of a being of His own creation with justice or mercy. I quarrelled rebelliously with the arguments of divines, and finally sank into the black pit of unbelief, and impiously denied the existence of a God. The beauties of nature that I had loved as a poet, lost their charm, as the accidental fruit of a soil tumbled from chaos into existence. I heard the birds sing without emotion, for they seemed no longer the offspring of God’s beneficence; I no longer noted the regularity of the seasons, or the course of the heavenly bodies. The exquisite harmony of nature seemed anarchy and confusion; I only observed the fluctuating tide of human events, and in the confusion of the warring elements I saw evidence that substantiated my views of infidelity. Like the butterfly

that spreads its wings, glitters in the sunbeam, losing its beautiful gloss ; so human beings I believed winged themselves in the sky of a broader atmosphere and passed away.

“ This state of my mind, tended to the destruction of all moral sense. I plunged into the wildest scenes of dissipation, but not long did they delight me. I had been too deep a student and dreamer, to care for play, or the rioting in the halls of pleasure ; yet I abandoned no scene of revelry from conscientious scruples. In this state, I resolved to travel. I went over the continent of Europe, and to Eastern lands. I dallied in the bowers of beautiful maidens, and flirted with the dark-eyed girls of southern climes, but as lightly and delicately, as I would kiss from morning flowers their dew. I seemed insensible to the fascination of woman, and for none felt an emotion of passionate love. I believed the Koran, as sincerely as the Bible ; and made myself the master of various languages, that I might converse with all nations, and learn their histories and creeds. During this time, I was insensible to the future. The present was the arena of my thoughts, and in novelty and excitement, I drowned the past.

“ Returning to Liverpool, I heard of your husband. Curiosity led me to seek his acquaintance. The rumor which subsequently reached me, that he had separated from you, gave me secret satisfaction. I harbored selfish revenge in my heart for your conduct, and resolved that I would be a barrier to your re-union. I then doubted not that your regard for me had awakened his jealousy. I had ceased to love you, but I felt bitterly the injustice you had done me. With gloating desire, I wished to see the man you had made miserable as myself. We had rarely met in New York. I did not remember him. I was presented by the name of Hamlin, and he knew me not as your discarded lover. I

scanned keenly his countenance, and discovered his secret suffering, but with it all a holy resignation, to me undefinable. We canvassed matters of business, and became mutually interested in speculations, which finally connected us in our financial matters. Our pecuniary interests were subsequently involved, bringing us much together.

“Our natures, though widely dissimilar, grew congenial. There was something, as he afterwards told me, in my state of mind, which interested him. I knew in acquirements, in early education, and advantages, that he was my inferior, but he embodied what I had long sought—the bright angel Truth.

“His simple and clear reasoning, had its power from the absence of all subtle logic, all abstract speculations, which had led me into a labyrinth of doubt. He brought to my vision, the great moral facts of the Scriptures, he showed me the revelation of the moral law on Mount Sinai, in a light in which I had never before viewed it; and clearer than all, he showed me his faith and hope in Christ. He also opened to my understanding the principal doctrines involved in the New Testament. I saw that if such could sustain martyrs in their sufferings, and prove the ground-work of the apostles’ faith, that I must believe in the truth of the Gospel. But I yet saw through a glass darkly, until convicted of the power of Christianity, in the example set before me; in the patient resolution, with which he adhered to his principles, regarding his separation from you. I felt that the religion of the Gospel was his only support, and I turned from the glosses of contentious men, and the carpings of critics, to the testimony of the Christian ages, and resolved to learn his faith. I saw that he had nothing to do with the philosophic moonshine of idealists—that he loved to sail on the ocean of the past—to dive into its depths for sacred pearls, not to wear them on now, or

drop them in his path, but to hide them in his soul's casket ; and that he loved to dwell upon the characters of the mighty men of old, to learn of them true sublimity. If on his mind shadows had ever rested, they were dissipated in the sunlight of truth ; and his spirit now yearned for that state of being, when knowledge, excellence, God, should in brightest effulgence shine before him, undimmed by earthly mists. A 'new heavens, and a new earth,' were often before his imagination, for beyond the stars he saw, ' light inaccessible, and full of glory.'

" Yet even with this bright and beautiful example before me, I did not become suddenly a Christian. My struggles were long and fearful; my conviction of sin was great. Like Thomas, I would have palpable evidence to believe, but when I released my hold of things tangible, and with the eye of faith saw my Redeemer, I obtained a hope sure and steadfast.

" Elinor, I have, I fear, wearied you. I came back, with a resolution to return good for evil, and if in my power, to unite you to your husband. But during the ten years of my absence, study, time, sorrow and travel, had so changed my outward man, that you did not know me—I resolved then, to preserve my incognito, and if possible, to show you that I despised your course in life. In this I succeeded ; my frown and disapprobation, I saw deterred you from many a folly, and had you have meditated any step more hazardous to your reputation, you could not have done it with my knowledge. I guarded you secretly, to accomplish my aim. But when I saw, that in your glorious beauty, you loved me, I needed my principles to withstand the allurements of your rare fascinations.

" But I had the will and determination to promote my good work ; and, though God, in His mysterious dealings, cut short the existence of him I would have made happier, still may

we not hope that his death may be a more sanctifying means of grace, than his life ?

“ And now that you understand my motives in visiting you, and for censuring one for whom I shall ever feel the warmest friendship, I would speak of my later experience.

“ I love your child with the devotion of a tried, and disciplined heart. I love her as one mortal should another, bound for a haven beyond life’s troubled sea—with such soulful tenderness, that could I see her made happier in another connection, I would not struggle to possess her. But sweeter than all else that life can offer, is the conviction that my affection is returned. We, as one, ask your sanction to our union ?

“ PHILIP HAMLIN.”

Mr. Hamlin received the following reply :

“ My sanction is not essential to the union of two who seem to have been in spirit united. And yet on this broad earth is there one to whom I would not sooner have wedded my daughter than to Hugh Shelbourne ? My frame shudders, and my blood chills, in view of the connection ; and the strong, fervid impulse of my nature would bid me reply, ‘ God forbid a marriage so unnatural ! ’ But while I dream and revolt, I forget that it is not he who asks for my child. Yes—deny it no longer—Hugh Shelbourne is dead. I give her to Philip Hamlin.

“ ELINOR MILLER.”

Jeanie was now seventeen. The grass had grown green and lush on her father’s grave, and the birds had built their nests over the hallowed spot. Time had softened her grief, and brought new and fresh emotions to her young bosom, as she trod brighter paths than those of her younger life. New light seemed born in her beautiful eyes, new joy added to

her heart by the change effected in the character of her mother and her habits, who, in a retired sphere, became as conspicuous for her Christian performance of duty, as she had once been in her brilliant orbit, for gaiety and frivolity.

It was an autumn day. The leaves were turning to crimson and purple shadows, covering the hill-tops about Jeanie's birth-place, with resplendent mantles—each a coat of many colors.

Like a masquerading troupe of revellers the forest host was decked, some in kingly glory, with leafy crowns of gold ; their queens and maids of honor purple-mantled ; others of the "goodlie companie," sporting as crimson-headed Turks, with glowing sash and scimetar—bright Circassians in their train, their fingers henna-dyed. Evergreens, like young fresh maidens, myrtle-wreathed, scattered here and there ; and among them, as if sprung from fires below, towers of flaming splendor stood, turned in a single night to gorgeous scarlet grandeur. As if with departing, gay-winged birds, and summer's roseate skies, nature would make amends, and sport in mockery of woe a semblance of their hues.

It was such a day and such a scene as would fain make one a voyager of the upper skies, to look down upon such a painted landscape.

On an eve as beautiful, Jeanie went forth with a quick-beating heart down the old mossed pathway, to meet, as requested, her coming bridegroom.

She seemed fairer for her sable dress—her white arms and neck moulded, as if fresh from the great Sculptor's hand. The silken wavelets on her brow wore no decoration, until the sun came out from behind a cloud, and through the shaking leaves dropped motes of gold, which danced and trembled on her hair.

And was the lover "too old" for the buoyant, soulful girl, as he held her beneath the oaks, again encircled near

his heart? It might be, for his pale features wore a far deeper, serener cast of thought than hers, but as he stopped to look again into the drooping eyes he kissed, an expression that seemed to speak more eloquently than words, told that if there was disparity in years, yet, as her mother had said, in spirit Heaven had made them one.

But can we say as much of another pair, whose betrothal has been made as public, and whose marriage promises to take the precedent? This match would not have seemed of heavenly birth, and yet likely to result in wedlock, for Keturah Sprunt was never known to be "slack" in her undertakings. Consequently the bachelor was doomed from the hour they together kneaded their first batch of dough. He returned from the South poor and penitent, and though not "received with open arms" by the fair deserted, still, after a quarrel, she confessed herself ready to "make the most of of such a spine-tangled vagrant."

The occasion was one causing great excitement, owing to the many misgivings of Mr. Flint, whose fears of the risk incurred grew upon him as the hour approached for the ceremony; and, but for the enterprise and energy of Keturah, the wedding might have finally proved an abortive project. Not that he did not intend to go through with the business, but he wanted to take his own time, and not be in a hurry about it.

But a vision of his intended bride, in a green silk, and travelling bonnet, out of which shone her apple-red cheeks, brought him to his senses, and he knew when the minister arrived, his hour had come.

Still he was tardy; and not until Keturah had held a threatening confab with him in the wood-shed, where she found him sitting in his wedding clothes on a basket of chips, could he be induced to present himself as a candidate for matrimony. "You might as well drive a pig," said the newly apparelléd.

"Let me alone," replied the victim, "and wait till I have finished this turnip—it's awful tough."

And Keturah was right, he wouldn't be "driv," and much to the chagrin of the company, consented to the solemnization of his nuptials, only on the condition that he stood up where he was.

"But the witnesses?" politely argued the priest.

"Them oxen is enough," replied the obstinate.

Seeing a crowd approaching the doorway, advantage was taken by the clergyman of the bachelor's proposal, and the ceremony at last faithfully performed. All, therefore, ended well—the company assembled universally remarking that Keturah had never looked more red and resolute, than during the marriage rite, if Zebedee was more than ever big-mouthed and grouty.

Out of regard to his appearance as bridegroom, Betscy had given more cloth and amplitude to his skirts ; and in the frantic attitude he assumed, his appearance resembled that of a stuffed bird, whose legs in the embalming process, had been neglected, in the undue consideration paid to the superior beauty of the tail feathers.

After the ceremony, the couple proceeded down the hill to the brook, where a repast was furnished by the old people, and might have been enjoyed by the bride and the company, but for Mr. Flint's impatience to proceed to Mad River, and be "out of sight," before the mail came in ; consequently, seeing the horse and wagon awaiting his movements, he pocketed a lunch, and with a twist of his countenance to Mrs. Flint, jumped in. There was no alternative but for the bride to follow, or lose her husband, and thus the couple departed on their wedding excursion, amidst the cheers and loud hurrahs of a merry company.

So characteristic was the sly movement on the part of the cautious Zebedee, as to bring even a smile to the face of the placid Jane, where a soft holy calm seemed since the

death of Mr. Miller, to have fixed its impress—as if all restless emotion had forever passed from her soul, and left it in serene repose. Whatever sorrows had clouded, or shadows had darkened her inner life, were not revealed on the surface of her mind ; but as if she had given up all selfish desires she went about in her sphere, quiet and humble in the performance of personal duty ; and efficient, persevering and consistent in her regard for the weal of others. Blest is the household who can claim for its inmate a good Aunt Jane.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

“ **S**CARCE one day married, and petitioning for funds?” said Mr. Hamlin, “ I had forgotten we needed anything so material for existence, so overcome am I by this early matrimonial proceeding.”

“ It was absurd, wasn’t it?” laughed Jeanie, “ but then poor grandpa would have never considered the ceremony a legal one, unless he had been a witness; and he must go away before breakfast—but as we are not fashionable people, it is all the same—but my petition—I am half afraid to tell you,” said the newly wedded, blushing, “ I want so much.”

“ Do you not know that you are wholly destitute now, a beggar on my bounty? so be very gracious, if you would win your suit. And now pray what may be the burden of this mighty appeal?”

The little hand on the shoulder of the fond husband was drawn to his cheek, while he feigned surprise at the proposition made by his bride.

“ Put on your hat,” said he, “ and defy all rules of etiquette, especially as no one but the birds will know of the impropriety, by taking a stroll with me—the last walk we shall have over these old hills for some time together. Then I will see if I can fathom all your unreasonable desires.”

The young wife consented, and to escape the observation of the household at Castlemont, they went forth quietly,

and across the fields at twilight. Their steps led towards a hill affording a pleasant walk to its summit.

"I would like to go quite to the top," said Jeanie.

"A characteristic wish, my ambitious girl—but rather aspiring, considering the step upwards you have taken to-day."

They ascended slowly, sometimes stopping to rest, then plodding on, while Jeanie laughingly urged forward her less agile companion. The acclivity reached, they looked around on the variegated landscape—their eyes wandering to the green wavelets below, then above to the twinkling stars as they came forth from the now grey sky.

The scene and the exercise elated the spirits of Jeanie; who expressed her delight and enjoyment in the prospect. "Yes, it is sweet and tranquil now, but I fear we shall soon be overshadowed with clouds. See that leaden bank against the horizon! Do you ever feel timidity in a storm?"

Unconsciously the arm that rested upon her husband's clung more trustfully.

"Not with the sense of protection I now feel," she confidently said. Yet, her mind was in a state keenly alive to external impressions; and as the clouds gathered while she spoke, and the air grew chill, she needed the exercise of her loving faith to drive from her imagination the sad impression created by the heavens dark shadow, on the eve of her bridal day. Her thoughts wandered to Ralph, and the hour when a scene darker, more fearfully ominous, had excited to angry demonstration, an exhibition of violent feeling.

She looked in contrast upon the noble serenity pictured on the face of her husband. Emotions of indefinable peace crept up in her heart, mingled with the holy trust that confidence in the truly good ever inspires.

"Let the storms of heaven now beat," she silently murmured, "so that, oh God, I am spared Thy love and his."

And he whose fidelity she craved, was there now any attainable good in life, for which he yearned? Was not the sweet pure nature of his idolized one, fitted for the endurance of life's conflicts? Once his heart would have been agonized with the thought that a being so beloved, should ever know emotions of sorrow or woe.

Now he felt that she was prepared to meet them. Doubly sacred had become his guardianship of the fatherless child; and was it a trust less sweet and blissful for their abiding faith in each other? He felt that while he had loved her beauty, and with fervid emotion watched the unfolding of the sweet flower he would possess and cherish, that though he saw the wreck of the exquisite temple—the Jeanie that he had worshipped, would ever live in his heart, her own, lovable pure-minded self.

The rain did not fall as they had first predicted—and though the sky looked still threatening, they proceeded home by the churchyard to take a last look at the grave of the departed, ere they left Castlemont for a contemplated tour of travel. Long they lingered at the burial spot of one they had both so fervently loved, and with a sweet feeling of satisfaction remembered that he who lay below, had united them ere he died. Was the smile that accompanied the act ever forgotten, or the remembrance of the dead ever faint in their hearts?

Before reaching the gate, the wanderers accosted Arthur and Mary, now coming to meet them—gaily laughing at their romance and imprudence. The old topic had been revived, which had called forth the raillery of the bridegroom when they started; but not until seated in the cosiest corner of Mary's cheerful parlor, could Mr. Hamlin draw from Jeanie a renewal of her petition.

"But I am afraid you will think the sum so extravagant.

She looked archly into the upturned face, without explanation of her philanthropic and complimentary schemes.

"I can't think of such a presumptuous proposal—but seriously, my Pico, what do you wish to do with so many thousands? You surely are not going to feather a nest in these woods?"

"No—no—but I will make others happy and comfortable."

"Coax again, and I may not refuse you. Surely you are not going to endow that crusty old bachelor, Flint, who used to abuse you so?"

"I ought not to regret that he is obliged, when I make my good friend Keturah so nicely off, in that dear little cot down by the brook."

"But this 'dear little cot,' will not cost so much?"

"You know Virginia, too, is a bride, and I ought to—"

"Endow Ralph," interposed the husband, banteringly.

"Don't tease me," whispered Jeanie, a pair of red lips coming somewhere near the broad forehead, around which lay the dark locks she curled and uncurled, as she wove her pretty argument.

"But for dear good Mr. Cameron," she continued, "I might not have taken the walk we have had to-night."

"A very modest way of telling me how much I am indebted to this cotton grower, and consequently to his beautiful daughter, on whom you would bestow a fortune, in the delicate guise of a bridal present. Own up, Jeanie."

"But this is not all I would do," said the bride, hushing the lips that would still further rally her, "I must have dear Virginia with me all next summer—"

"I don't know about this arrangement," eyeing the pleader keenly.

"But you would not hesitate to comply with all my proposals if you knew that they afforded me the first moments of happiness I felt after parting with you. Virginia, yes,

dear Virginia, threw her arms about my neck and kissed me when she heard you were saved. I cannot think of that moment without remembering all their sympathy"—

"Enough, enough, dear one ; you know the chord to touch. Give them all you wish, so I am left the donor ;" and with the confession came not as once, "my dear child," but with passionate fondness the husband parted the brown curling waves, and as he kissed the white brow beneath, murmured, "my own—my wife."

That moment of confidence seemed to bring their minds in closer, more blissful communion. Mr. Hamlin's thoughts wandered, as he looked at the young creature in her girlish loveliness by his side, into the past, when he deemed that he had become hardened and embittered against her sex, and he scarcely believed himself identified with one who could have once believed woman's purity and faith a delusive poetic dream.

Jeanie watched the wandering expression, and signified her belief that she could divine his thoughts.

"What were they, Jeanie ?"

"You were thinking how little I could return you for all your wisdom and experience—that I had nothing but a poor, little loving heart to offer as a balancing gift."

"Think you, sweet one, that tree on the lawn, with every leaf expanded, and some turning at the top, does not love the dew of heaven as well as the young sapling ? Does he not need it the more to cheer and make fresh his existence ? Jeanie, I would say, let the young heart unite with its twin spirit, and together grow old, mingling as one ; but should a dove-eyed, loving young creature come like a nestling bird to the breast of one older—grudge not the blessing to the soul made green again by the freshness of youth, springtime and hope. Few there are thus blessed, who do not more tenderly cherish the beloved one ; and the more purely, if by a strong effort of will they have ever crushed a passion for

another. Tenderness, deep as that of a woman's love, is then the strong characteristic of the attachment that knows no restless strife."

And yet how craving was the exacting heart that enshrined its young idol so tenderly. The thirsting soul of Philip Hamlin had not again tasted the sweet waters of affection, to be satisfied with the icy current of "respect and esteem," and Jeanie had only to think of her father's lonely blighted heart to know that the sternest natures are oftenest mostly keenly wounded by neglect. She felt instinctively that she had the full faith and confidence of her husband, and since the full revelation of his history, she had given him hers.

It was the eve before their marriage when the disclosure took place, and so true and vivid was the narration that the "child" then exclaimed, in painful agitation :

"I cannot wed the lover of my mother."

But looking up at the speaker, she heard the deep low voice say with calm tenderness :

"This is a matter we cannot debate or delay. If you say so, I will go from you, and never cross your path ; you must decide to give me forever up, or be my wife. If I loved her of whom I speak, for you I have no love to offer, for"—the stern voice trembled—"I could resign you, even though this hand were pledged to me, if by the renunciation, I ensured your happiness. You perhaps feel that in this confession, I profess not the passionate tenderness you crave." He drew nearer to him the youthful form. She recoiled not. She did not even remove her brow from the hand that held it against his breast. "Jeanie," he said, "I would never cease my efforts to make you happy."

And had she momentarily doubted the man in whom her first unwavering faith was placed ? It was not long—no word, no confession came, but Philip Hamlin knew that Jeanie loved him, and would be his wife.

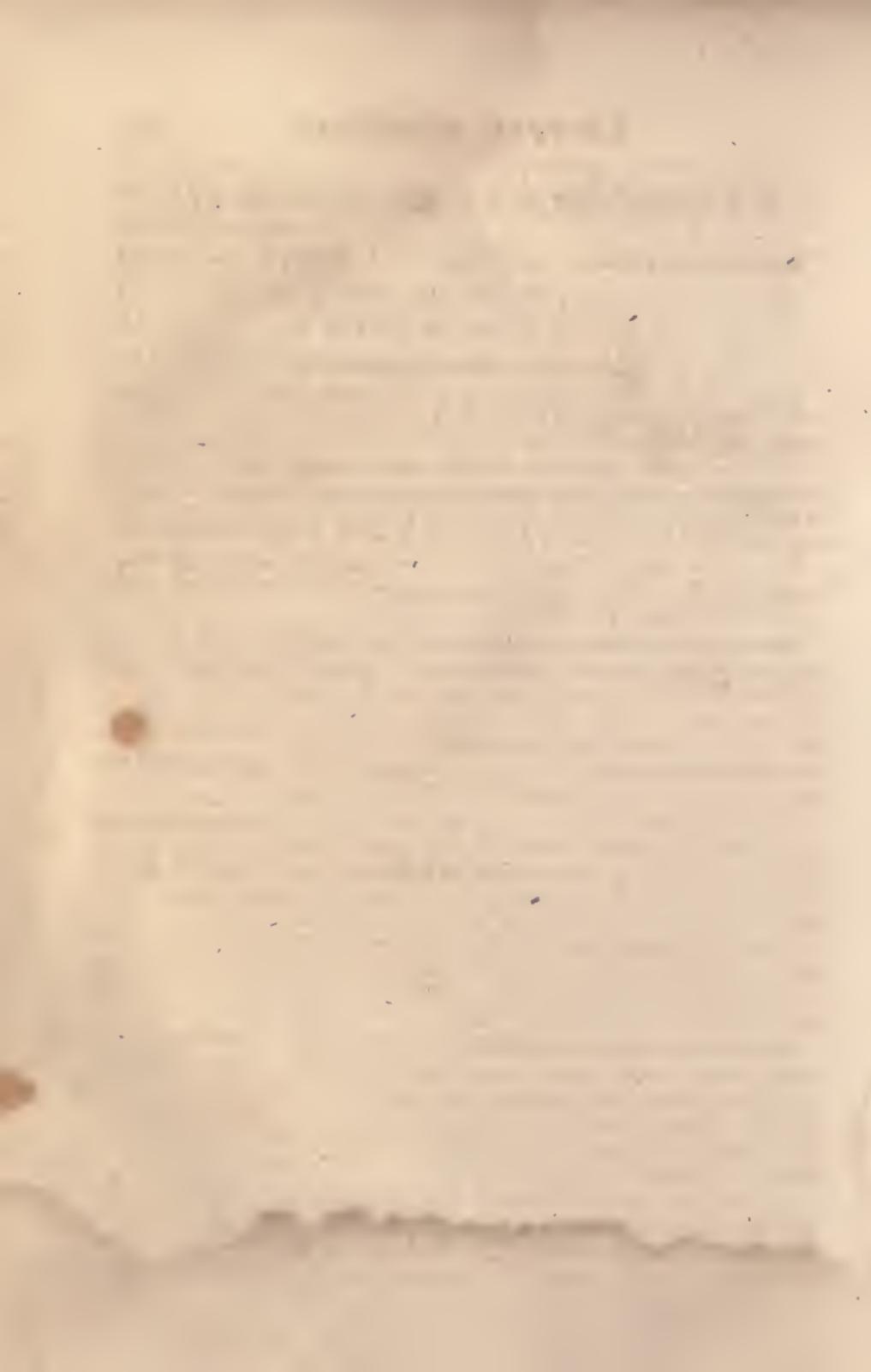
And thus, in a digression, we have told how the only cloud to their intercourse had passed over. And now that they were married, and in the fullness of their joy, he questioned still, as if he would ever hear the echo of her voice to his fond query :

“ Tell me truly, is my little girl happy with a husband to whom she is, and will be ever, a child as well as wife ? Has she found her ‘ home ’ ? ”

The young face was hidden and drawn closer to the shoulder on which she leaned, as she whispered :

“ When a little girl, I seemed in dark paths wandering ; but I am now THROUGH THE WOOD, and blessed with one who has been to me my TORCHLIGHT.”

THE END.



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